GRANVILLE ISLAND

An Urban Oasis

By Michael McCullough

100-07376

The Book Team

Granville Island An Urban Oasis *was a collaborative effort. Heading the team was Suzanne Fong, Director of Public Relations at Grey Advertising's Vancouver office, who recently published an award winning commemorative book for Boston Pizza.*

To Suzanne fell the task of finding people to write, research, photograph and design the book. She chose Michael McCullough, a native-born Vancouverite and 10-year print journalist, as the author. It was a new kind of challenge for Michael, who is better known to British Columbian readers for his contributions to business publications and as managing editor of Coast, The Outdoor Recreation Magazine.

The design team at Grey included Creative Director Jeff Lewis, who helped on the cover design, Art Director David Wong and Designer Elenita Torres who together created and arranged their selected photographs with the text, Sue Sullivan who readied the creative elements for printing, and Sorrel Tomkies who was in charge of the production. Responsible for Technical Editing was Sheila Jones of International Wordsmiths and printing by Hemlock Printers in Vancouver, B.C.

Freelance photographers John Dafoe and Kate Tully deserve a special note of thanks. Several years ago John and Kate coordinated a project that involved 60 photographers, of which 10 were kids from Arts Umbrella and False Creek Elementary School, taking 10,000 photographs of Granville Island for the Granville Island Photography Project. We are proud to include a number of its photographs in Granville Island An Urban Oasis.

Finally, this book could not have come about without the support, assistance and guidance of Granville Island's management team. The result is a tribute to the visionary and hard-working people who made and continue to make the wonder that is Granville Island.

Twenty years ago, *Granville Island was transformed from a decrepit 37-acre industrial slum in Vancouver's False Creek to possibly the most successful urban redevelopment ever seen in North America. Rusty tin-sided factories were reborn as a public market, an art school, shops, restaurants, theatres, and a great deal more. Today, Granville Island boasts more than eight million visits a year, 2,600 jobs and the highest sales per square foot of any public market on this continent.*

The real success of Granville Island cannot be measured in numbers, but instead in the quality of the visitor's experience. The Island is rife with unique attributes and quirky surprises. Who makes the eyeglasses worn by Robin Williams and Elton John? What restaurant has the best outdoor deck in Vancouver? Where did Generation X author Douglas Coupland study sculpture? When can you see some of the world's weirdest comedy acts? Why is there a cement plant in the middle of the Island?

The pages to follow answer these and many more questions. They chronicle the Granville Island story, celebrate what the Island has to offer, and peer inside its seldom-seen inner life. Words and pictures are only a prelude to first-hand experience, however. Come see Granville Island for yourself.

GRANVILLE ISLAND
An Urban Oasis

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Introduction

Brian Lang

WHAT IS GRANVILLE ISLAND?

A 35-acre plot of land, *or a community of people?*

A happy accident of history, *or a master-planned urban space?*

A public amenity, *or a thriving commercial centre?*

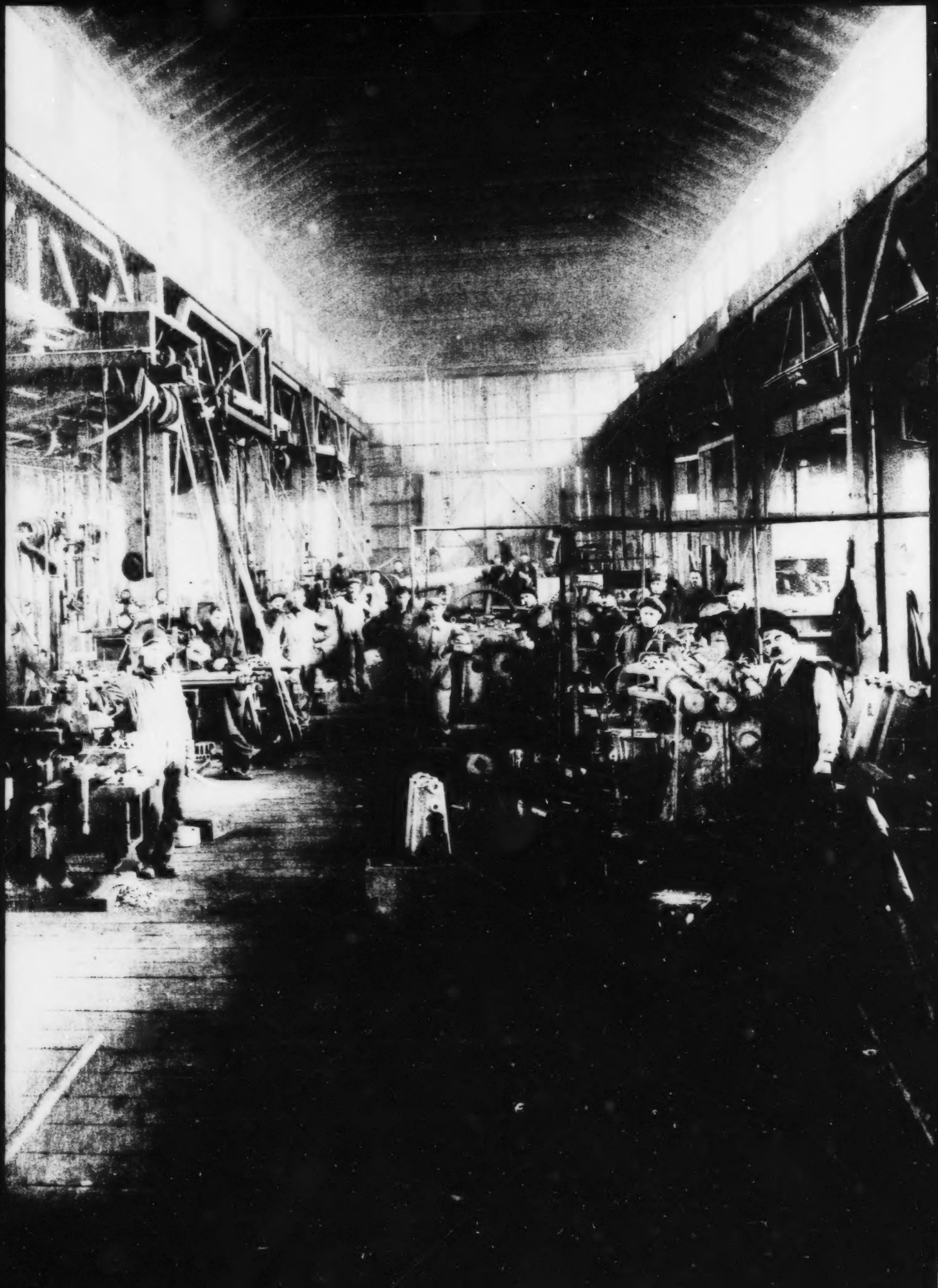
A historic district, *or a young, still-evolving development?*

A busy, bustling area, *or a relaxing one?*

A place separate from Vancouver, *or the city's heart?*

The answer is yes. Granville Island is all of these things. Yet for most visitors, residents and people who work on the Island, it is boats plying the water, relaxing on a patio, mountains, bridges and tall buildings rising in the background. It is coffee and a newspaper in the gentle morning sun, an unhurried pace, the smell of fresh food, the cries of seagulls wheeling overhead. It is specialty goods and gifts to be found nowhere else. It is first-class restaurants, live theatre, arts and crafts, and festivals for every season. No place epitomizes city life on the West Coast so much as Granville Island.

It's a remarkable thing, really. Remarkable that, smack dab in the middle of a city of two million, there could be such a place. Remarkable that it manages to maintain its ambience not by shunning the city bustle around it or by hiding its gritty, industrial past. No, if anything Granville Island embraces these things. Perhaps most remarkable is how, after barely two decades in its current incarnation, the Island could become so essential to the identity of Vancouver.



Island heritage

PART ONE

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

Courtesy of Hazel King

In a previous life

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

CHAPTER 1

GRANVILLE ISLAND'S INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION

A century ago, *there was no such thing as Granville Island. There was the small mill town of Granville, renamed Vancouver in 1886 with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The old name remained in the form of its main north-south thoroughfare, Granville Street, which spanned the small inlet known as False Creek. The Creek then was more than twice the size it is today, and its tidal flats included two sandbars over which the rickety, wooden Granville Street bridge travelled. Those two sandbars would become Granville Island.*

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

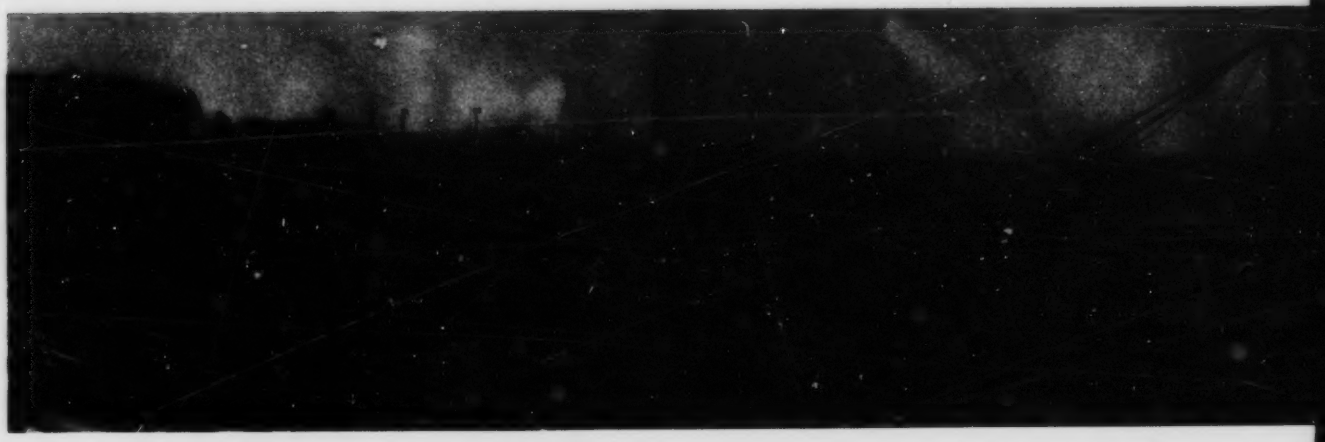
Since time immemorial local First Nations had used the sandbars as a kind of fish corral. Exposed at low tide, the sand was stuck with wooden stakes shaped into bottle-necked weirs. As the tide rose, fish would swim into the weirs and become trapped. As modern-day engineers discovered while re-laying the Island's waterworks in the mid-1970s, the site also features a natural artesian spring, from which the first inhabitants of the False Creek area drew water for drinking and cooking.

The new settlers did not see the use of tidal flats. They wanted either water deep enough to navigate or dry land to buy, sell and develop. In the wild-west atmosphere of turn-of-the-century Vancouver, the tidal flats around False Creek became the subject of land grabs and jurisdictional disputes. The federal government controlled tidal waters, and the CPR owned most of the surrounding land. Beginning in 1888 the City of Vancouver petitioned Ottawa for foreshore rights.

But what if you created dry land where there was none before? Into this atmosphere of competing jurisdictions trooped a trio of sometime CPR contractors. Hugh Keefer, George Grant Mackay and Edgar Vachon drove wooden pilings into the False Creek mud, planning to erect a sawmill on the site. If the objections of the harbourmaster wouldn't stop them, a court injunction by the CPR would. Keefer argued that the sandbars were really an island, and therefore not part of either the company's or the federal government's foreshore rights. The federal Marine Ministry did not agree, and ruled that the emerging island would be a hazard to navigation. For the next 20 years the sandbars – still fortified by piles – lay idle, serving only as a nuisance to the growing traffic in tugs, barges and booms making their way into and out of False Creek. They also served

Courtesy of Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd.

■ Granville Island in 1931 (above). Most of the tenants survived the Great Depression by withholding taxes. ■ Much of the concrete used to build Vancouver came from Diethers Ltd., now Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. (lower left). ■ False Creek at the turn of the century. Granville Island would rise beneath the Granville Bridge at centre (opposite).



■ City Hall's battle over the Vancouver Iron & Engineering Works (shown at left) proved a watershed for False Creek and all its adjoining lands, including Granville Island (middle background).

as the foundation of a second, steel Granville Street Bridge that would come to span the Creek in 1909. A series of private business people, most notably Robert Kelly, co-founder of the Kelly Douglas food conglomerate, proposed schemes to reclaim the False Creek sandbars. Finally in 1915, with the Panama Canal open, Europe hungry for war materiel, and the port of Vancouver growing by leaps and bounds, the newly-formed Vancouver Harbour Commission (a federal entity) did give the go-ahead to the reclamation project. The island would be 35 acres, connected to the mainland by a combined road and rail bridge at its south end. It would be owned by the Commission and leased to industrial tenants. Almost a million cubic yards of fill was dredged from the surrounding waters of False Creek to create the spreading pancake under the Granville Street Bridge. It was initially christened "Industrial Island," but the name that stuck came down from the bridge overhead. Total cost: $342,000.

BOOM AND BUST

Walking Granville Island today, you can see the traces of its origins. Around trees you can see the sandy soil deposited for millennia by the many streams draining into False Creek. That soil was abruptly dug up from the tidal flats and smoothed to a surface exactly 10 feet above the high-tide mark. You can see the piles – mostly steel replacements of the wooden originals – lining the Island's north shore. The second (1909) Granville Bridge bisected the Island along what is today Old Bridge Street. In the narrow lots and buildings you can see the logic of early Twentieth-Century industrial land use; the 50-60-foot-wide lots allowed the tenants frontage to the water at one end and to the Island's rail network, running roughly along the course of today's streets, at the other. The absence of curbs and sidewalks responded to the need for unobstructed passage for trucks, trolleys and forklifts.

False Creek in the 1920s was still the sawmilling hub of British Columbia's south coast, but the first tenants of Granville Island tended toward newer secondary industries serving the forest, mining, construction and shipping sectors. The first tenant, B.C. Equipment Ltd., set the standard by building a wood-framed machine shop, clad on all sides in corrugated tin, at the Island's west end. (Today the same structure houses part of the Granville Island Public Market.) By 1923 virtually every lot on the Island was occupied, mostly by similar corrugated-tin

Courtesy of Hazel King

factories, often with stucco administrative offices built alongside.

The Island's factories made shingles, chain, barrels, wire rope and all manner of industrial machinery. They made nails, saws, paint, cement, rivets and boilers. Inside the factories were scenes more reminiscent of the Nineteenth Century than the Twentieth. Usually unheated, the factories were cold in the winter and stiflingly hot in the summer. The men worked 10 hours a day, six days a week. Welders worked metal without eye protection and nearly everybody's lungs and ears suffered from the smoke and the constant whine of machinery. At its height in 1930, 1,200 workers were employed on the Island. Most of the workers arrived at work by streetcar. There was a special stop in the middle of the Granville Street Bridge from whence they descended several flights of stairs to the Island below. The only other access to the Island was a pair of road and rail bridges leading to the Creek's south shore.

The boom ended with the onset of the Great Depression. Several of the sawmills ringing False Creek shut down, and a shantytown dubbed Bennettville (after Conservative Prime Minister R.B. Bennett) grew up along the channel opposite the Island on the Creek's south shore. (Living on floats and piles, the squatters would remain until the 1950s, when a typhoid scare and a grisly murder prompted the city to evict them.)

By and large, however, the secondary industries on Granville Island survived. They successfully lobbied the National Harbours Board (successor to the Vancouver Harbour Commission) to lower their rents and withheld civic taxes on the grounds that the city had no jurisdiction over federal property. The ensuing court case went all the way the House of Lords in London, then the highest court of appeal. The tenants lost, but by then the winds of war were blowing in Europe, and the industrial markets on which Granville Island's factories depended were well on the mend.

Demand for chain, wire rope and other products made on the Island soared as a result of the Second World War, and Granville Island entered its second heyday. As many of the young, male workers joined the armed forces, women took their place in the plants. The Island was considered so vital to the war effort that in 1942, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, special identification cards were issued to workers to prevent saboteurs from infiltrating it. A spectacular fire at the Overseas Wood Products mill, just opposite Granville Island

on the south shore of False Creek, seemed to confirm the suspicions of the most fearful, but it in fact pointed to something that would become more obvious after the war: the slow dereliction of industry all around False Creek.

■ As male workers left to fight in the Second World War, women took their places in the factories (below).
■ Sawmill on Granville Island, c. 1940: slow dereliction (opposite).

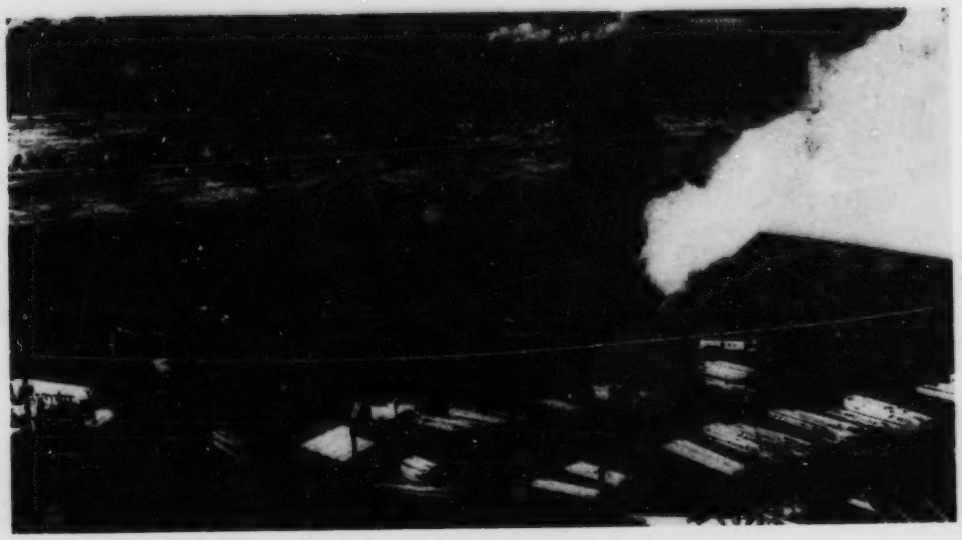
ASPHALT TO ASPHALT, RUST TO RUST

The sawmills and even the Island's factories were becoming oily, dirty fire traps. In the postwar period, demand for their heavy industrial output declined. To keep its tenants, the National Harbours Board still charged some of the lowest industrial rents going, which meant the declining businesses hung on, and no newer, tertiary industries took their place. Once a fertile fishing ground, False Creek had become a toxic sewer. Factories routinely discharged waste oil, sulphuric acid, concrete by-products and other pollutants directly into the surrounding water. At city hall, the call went up to do something CPR president Sir William Cornelius Van Horne had first proposed 60 years earlier: fill in the remainder of the Creek. While creating more industrial land, the plan would remove the water access on which many of the existing factories still depended, and turn Granville Island into a land-locked plot.

In the mayoralty race of 1950, both of the leading candidates endorsed the reclamation plan, even though the City was already committed to building a soaring, new, eight-lane Granville Street Bridge to replace the 1909 swing span that still stopped traffic every time a large vessel passed underneath. The Island was only saved by financial prudence. In the end the plan was scuttled by the $50-million price tag suggested in a consulting engineer's report. Just six acres were reclaimed from the Creek along the Island's south channel. It was technically no longer an island but instead a peninsula.

While spared from obliteration and expanded in size, the Island was nonetheless in serious decline. Fire struck factory after factory, and rather than rebuild, their owners either relocated or called it quits. Trucks had replaced barges and trains as the main means

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives



Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

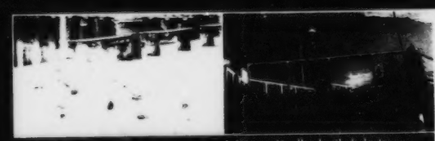
of transportation, and the Island's cramped, inner-city location no longer looked attractive to industry. Slowly, the vacant lots began to outnumber the occupied ones. The total rents charged by the National Harbours Board for its Island properties in 1962 amounted to just $62,000.

The Island and the rest of False Creek had fallen out of sync with the fast-growing City around it. They became places sunset industries went to die. Nobody questioned the need to do something about it, but there grew to be two camps with different approaches. The first proposed to replace old heavy industry with new. The second sought to return public access to the waterfront. Following a massive land swap that saw the City and the province of B.C. take over the CPR's land holdings around False Creek, the City set 1970 as the year when all leases to its waterfront lands would come under review. Led by Mayor Tom Campbell, the pro-industry forces supported extending the lease of the Vancouver Iron & Engineering Works (VIEW), a large but financially precarious industrial tenant on the Creek's south shore, for another 10 years.

Opponents, including City councillor and urban geographer Walter Hardwick and mayor-in-waiting Art Phillips, succeeded in blocking VIEW's lease extension. After a divisive and bitter battle, the resolution of the controversy would prove to be a turning point for Vancouver, with major implications for nearby Granville Island. The City had set its course for the future. From then on heavy industry would slowly lose its grip on False Creek. It would become a people-friendly place with various uses, from parkland to housing to public exhibition space.

Indisputably, the most successful transformation took place not to city property but to the one-time sandbars holding up the Granville Bridge. Despite the City's ongoing efforts to acquire it, Granville Island was still owned by the federal government. Then a funny thing happened. After years of neglect, that same federal government took an active interest in the Island's fate, thanks to the efforts of several visionary people. Their dream, and their stories, are contained in the chapters to come.

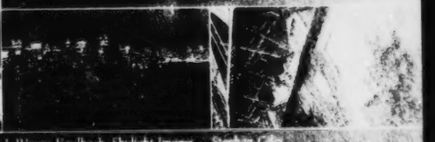
PART TWO



Michael Remek

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

Leslie Scragg



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Stephan Gillis

The island today

Greg Athans

CHAPTER 2

A 360° WALKING TOUR

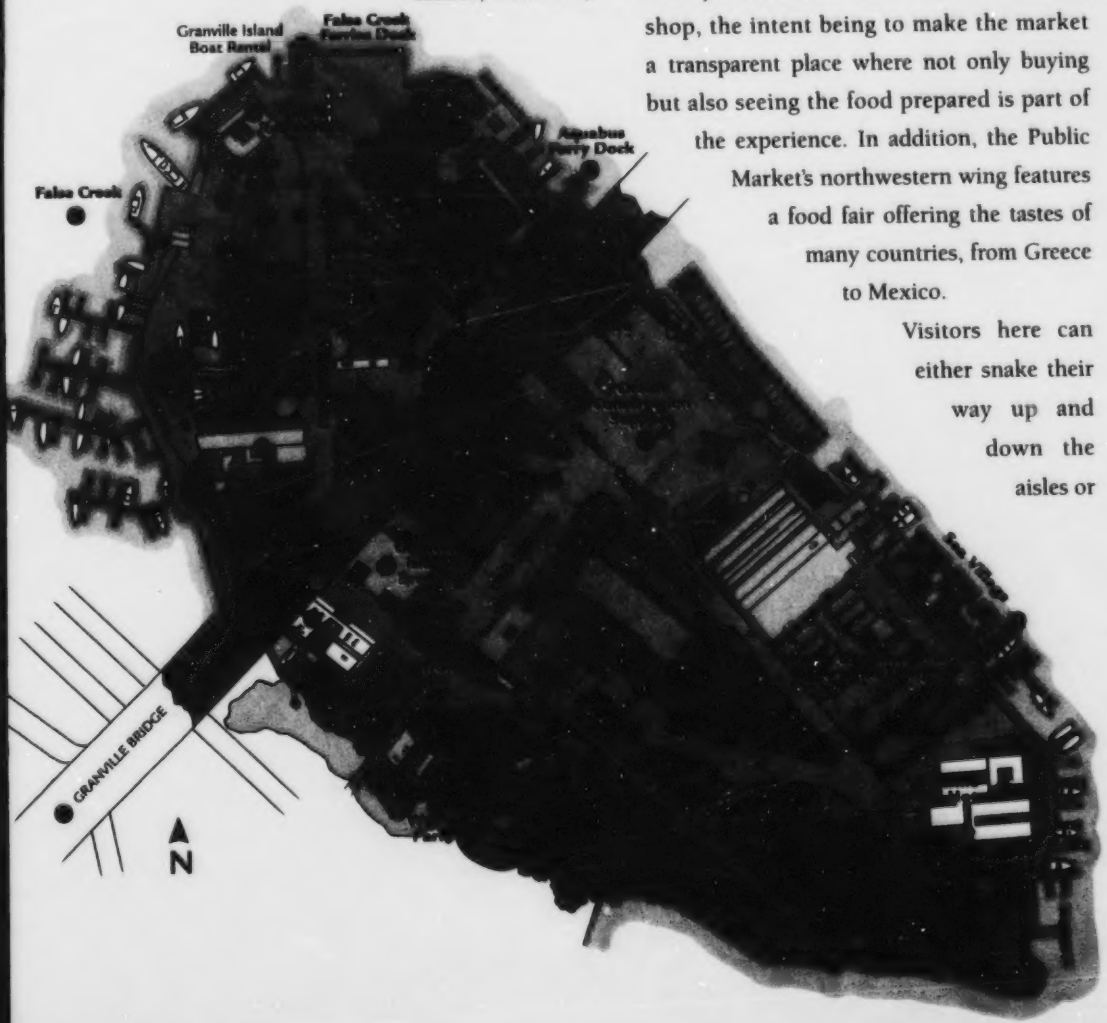
The first thing *the visitor notices about this part of the city is that it is an island. Not strictly speaking, of course. Since the 1950s, Granville Island has been attached to the south shore of False Creek by a broad isthmus, now mostly covered by grassy parkland. But there is an unmistakable separateness to the place. Whether getting there by car or bus or bike or on foot, you arrive at the Island, a place distinct from the city all around.*

You immediately know you are in a place where different norms apply, where the streets have no sidewalks, where lingering is the dominant pastime. The timetable gets suspended, strolling is sanctioned and you can't help but stop and look around you. It isn't roses you smell – more likely it's the salty odour of low tide, of rainwater rising as mist off the pavement, of fresh-ground coffee and pastries straight out of the oven – but you take notice all the same.

A walking tour of Granville Island naturally begins at the ❶ Public Market at the west end of ❷ Johnston Street. No event signalled the revival of the Island so much as the day the market opened in July of 1979. The assemblage of stalls set up by farmers, bakers, butchers, fishmongers and importers to sell their foods was an instant hit, and remains the Island's anchor. In time, other attractions and institutions would come to complement the Market and diversify the mix of people and uses on the Island. But the heart of the Island remains the Public Market, pulsing with life stronger than ever, seven days a week.

This happens to be the first structure built on the Island, on the site of the former B.C. Equipment Co. factory. Where once lay machinery and storage space, today you pass food stalls and kitchens. The merchants offer a selection of fresh fish, meat, poultry, produce and prepared foods unmatched in Vancouver, and probably all of the Pacific Northwest. Everything is on display, from bakery backrooms to a chocolate-making shop, the intent being to make the market a transparent place where not only buying but also seeing the food prepared is part of the experience. In addition, the Public Market's northwestern wing features a food fair offering the tastes of many countries, from Greece to Mexico.

Visitors here can either snake their way up and down the aisles or



Singing in the Rain

Vancouver is known among Canadian cities for its mild climate, and Granville Island's is milder still. The combination of urban convection (whereby the city around generates its own heat) and being on the water – where, thanks to the Japan Current, the temperature consistently stays above five degrees Celsius – the Island seldom suffers a frosty morning. In summer, the afternoon winds off English Bay ensure the temperature rarely rises above 25 degrees. But there is one climatic trait the Island shares with all of coastal British Columbia: it rains. A lot. Though May through October are normally dry, there are days in November and December when the historical probability of precipitation exceeds 70 percent. Vancouverites have adapted to this annual monsoon season, and so has Granville Island with its generous awnings and covered walkways. You can always spot the tourists; they're the ones carrying the umbrellas. The locals will tell you they've lost or worn their's out.

■ The Granville Island Brewery (opposite) pioneered today's craft brewing wave.
■ Island map: numbers indicate stops on walking tour.

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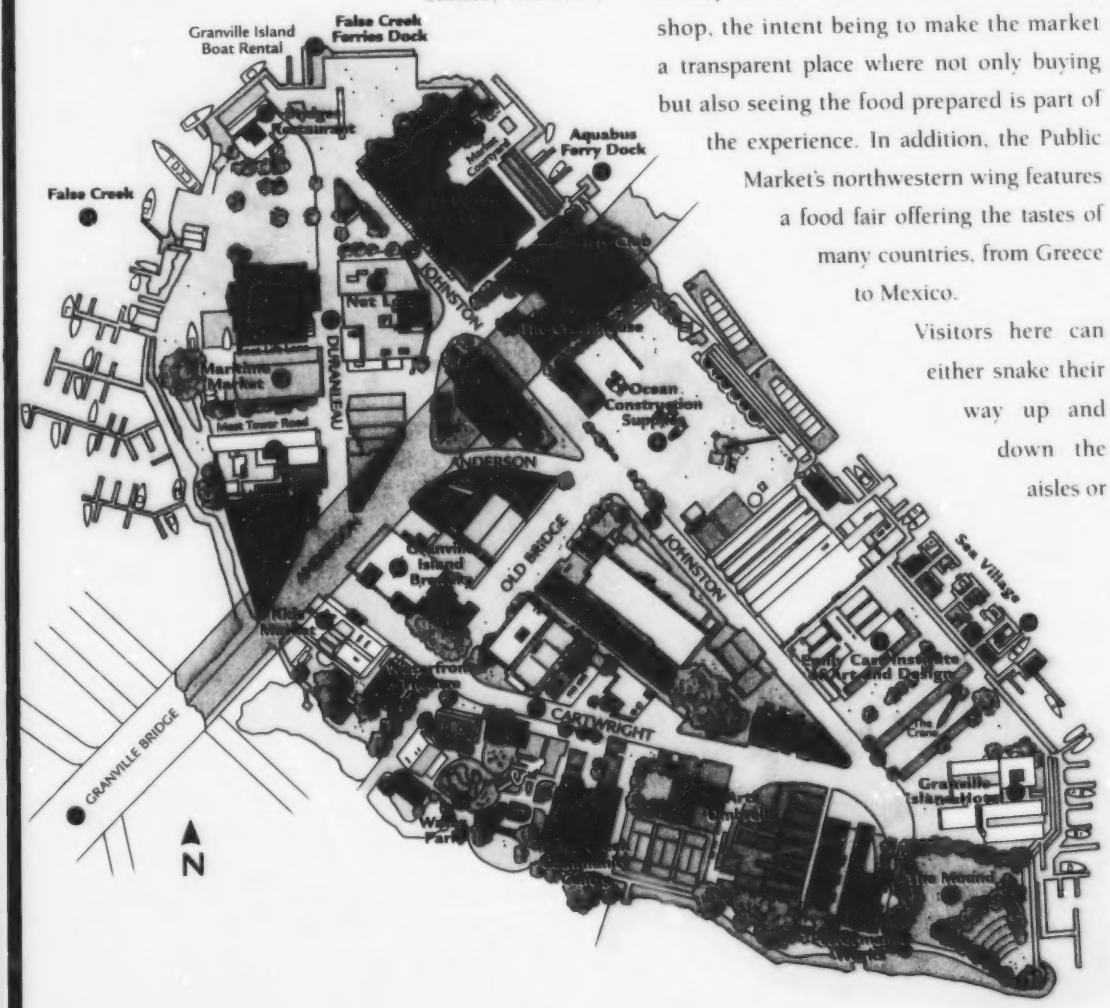

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■ Island map: numbers indicate stops on walking tour.

Granville Island Public Market

Built: 1917
Renovated: 1979
Architect: Norman Hotson, Hotson Bakker Architects

The former B.C. Equipment and Schaake Co. machine shops merge seamlessly with the Granville Island landscape. The street lintels seen outside literally lead indoors, lending structure to the aisles and providing a place to hang signs and lighting. Each stall has an industrial track on which to hang and adjust exposed-conduit lights. It's like a little bit of the Island's outdoor streetscape brought indoors. The Public Market also demonstrates the use of huge garage doors and wall openings of the former machine shop to bring natural light into the space. In warm weather, the barriers between outside and inside are peeled away altogether. In the cooler months, gas-fired heaters suspended from the ceiling help bring the market temperature up to something comfortable for the shopper wearing a coat. The polished concrete floor is not far removed from the concrete paviours of the street, and in the tradition of London's Covent Garden market, the entire space looks as if it can be hosed down in a pinch.

Courtesy of the CMHC

Jeno Orban

The Public Market then and now (above). It fills six former factory buildings.

continue on to the waterfront plaza facing across False Creek. Here, under the wheeling gulls and the wingflaps of pigeons lies the Island's chief relaxation spot, where loitering is an art form. On warm summer days visitors sit down on the cedar benches or lean against the railings to eat their ice cream or recoup their strength from a morning of market shopping. Shaped like a stage, the Market courtyard is the site of free performances during the annual jazz, folk, bluegrass and comedy festivals and is rarely without a busker or two. But the real performer here lies over the railing to the north: the non-stop parade of sailboats, tugs, fish boats, ferries, seaplanes, trolleys headed over the ❸ Granville Bridge, diners on balconies and apartment dwellers on the Creek's north shore. Perhaps no place is better suited for watching the life of a city pass by. Like staring into the flames of a campfire or waves crashing on a beach, the whirl of activity provides a mesmerizing entertainment.

The dock in front of the courtyard serves as a temporary mooring spot for visiting pleasure craft as well as the official landing point for visiting dignitaries. During Expo 86, the World's Fair that marked Vancouver's centennial in 1986, the then Prince and Princess of Wales landed here, and later that summer, members of the Dutch royal family. Visitors today can make their own landing (at considerably less cost) on the ❹ Aquabus and ❺ False Creek Ferries docks.

Walking east from the Public Market and its courtyard, the visitor passes the ❻ Arts Club, the island's theatrical hub. Two theatres, the Mainstage and Review theatre, straddle the alley. The main building also features the Backstage Lounge, a pub with a waterfront patio and live music on weekends. Even the Arts Club's parking lot is unusual. On designated days through the summer and fall months, farmers can sell their produce straight off the back of their trucks here.

Continuing east along Johnston Street, to your left on neighbouring lots, lie two tenants that symbolize the first of the new and the last of the old. The ❼ Creekhouse was a pioneer on the new Granville Island in the early 1970s. In what was then a derelict industrial area, Mitch Taylor and Bill Harvey turned an old chemical plant into a waterfront complex featuring a waterfront restaurant and craft-oriented shopping arcade. Before the federal

government and CMHC had hatched the idea to redevelop Granville Island, these enterprising tenants had shown the way. That the Creekhouse Project is intact and still successful 25 years later points to the enduring option that redevelopment provided.

Right next door stands ⑧ Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd., the larger of two industrial tenants remaining from Granville Island's previous incarnation as an industrial park. Now owned by European interests, the concrete plant has been mixing the foundations of downtown Vancouver's high rises since the 1920s. The Island continues to furnish Ocean with a uniquely advantageous location compared to suburban cement plants, and the company has demonstrated its long-term commitment to the Island by donating a corner of the lot as the Ocean Art Works, a site for building and storing major works of art.

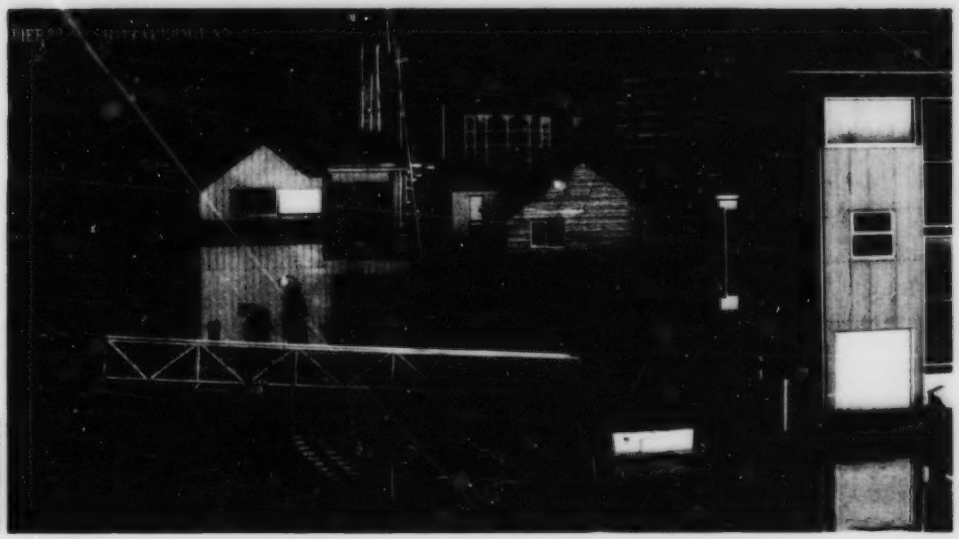
The next major feature spans Johnston Street to the east: the ⑨ Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (ECIAD). Once known as the Vancouver School of Art, the Institute was lured to Granville Island in the early 1980s to fulfill the Island's commitment to educational uses. As the site attests, however, ECIAD has grown dramatically since then, becoming a major institution in both traditional arts such as painting and sculpting and ultra-modern disciplines such as computer-aided design and multi-media. Its expansion has seen the educational component on the Island far outgrow the original plans. It's the sort of change in plans, however, that has been widely welcomed by the Island's owners and planners.

Kathryn Hatashita-Lee

Behind ECIAD, on the water, lies Granville Island's only concession to ⑩ residential development. The colony of a dozen floating homes represents a deal struck in the early 1980s by the City of Vancouver and the Granville Island administration to relocate floating residences from Coal Harbour in downtown Vancouver. Granville

Courtesy of the CMHC

■ Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. yard (above) recycles its own waste water.
■ An industrial-era crane today presides over a parking lot by the Granville Island Hotel. Classical concerts take place in the shadow of this old lumberyard crane at the Island's east end (left).



Kim Stallknecht

Island agreed to take the houseboats, then mostly modest cabins, to create Canada's first legal floating subdivision. They've since grown and been replaced by more lavish floating homes, though many of the original tenants remain.

Beyond lies ⓫ False Creek. At the time of Vancouver's incorporation as a City in 1886, it was a shallow basin four times its current size, ringed by extensive tidal mud flats. For most of the next century it became an industrial canal, crowded with log booms and barges, yet increasingly polluted by toxic chemicals. Now mostly ringed by residential developments, most notably the sprawling Pacific Place on the north shore (the former site of Expo 86), False Creek today is slowly returning to life. The water is clear, and fish dart among the pilings. Great blue herons wade along the shore. The occasional bald eagle sails overhead, and harbour seals, otters and even beavers have been spotted cruising the waters. In the middle of the parking lot, an old hoist for lifting heavy cargo from boats serves as an arresting visual reminder of the Island's industrial phase.

Larry Wells

Approaching its eastern extremity, the ⓬ Granville Island Hotel here represents one of Granville Island's works in progress. The original plan called for a "boatel," a place where marine travellers could tie up for the night and avail themselves of conveniences such as showers and washing facilities or opt for a hotel room. The seasonal nature of this business, however, proved unworkable.

In 1996, new owners set the stage for its current incarnation as a conventional 54-room hotel with a brew pub and fine restaurant. The hotel reopened in the fall of 1997, and hopes are high that this lower-key, higher-class combination will stick.

Reza Nojtabavi

The original redevelopment plans for Granville Island called for extensive stretches of open,

public space, which casual observers took to mean conventional, grassy parkland. The planners and architects in fact had a broader definition of public space in mind, but one part of the Island, next to the hotel, did become a kind of green refuge. Appropriately if inelegantly named ⓭ The Mound, the park on the Island's east end is the only place where the Island rises above its uniform 10-foot elevation stipulated in its construction in 1915. The Mound is made up of the remnants of the roadwork torn up in the late '70s to make way for the Island's new concrete-slab streets.

The park today provides a natural amphitheatre for performances, a stroll leading to a lookout for sightseers and a general good place for loafing around on a sunny day.

Turning southwest along ⓬ Cartwright Street now, the first building on your left is ⓯ Performance Works, one of the newer additions to the Island landscape. Long left as an empty shed or occupied by squatters, Performance Works is operated by the Granville Island administration as a developmental and performance space for theatre, dance and musical troupes. Next to Performance Works, on both sides of the street, a series of converted buildings house a new generation of manufacturers on Granville Island. These makers of specialty furniture, fabric art, architectural glass, wooden boats and folding sea kayaks, some of them former squatters in the area, continue the tradition of goods production on the Island, only their products fetch a somewhat higher price than the batches of nails and bolts from the old days.

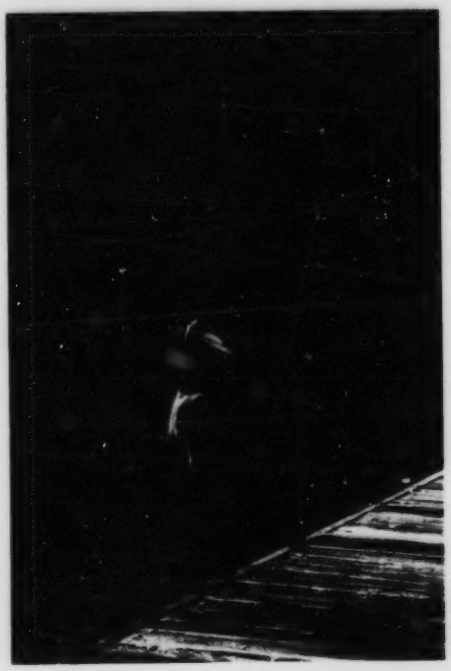
Next on your left is the first example of the Island's famous kid-centred enterprises. The combination of kids and performing arts comes together under one roof, so to speak, with the ⓰ Arts Umbrella. Run by a non-profit society mostly supported by corporate and individual donors, Arts Umbrella is a school for young actors, dancers, musicians and other performing artists.

Farther down on your left, is the Island's sports and recreation hub, including public tennis courts, the ⓱ False Creek Community Centre and the False Creek Racing Canoe Club, a focal point for seafaring paddle sports such as dragon boating and outrigger

■ Residential Sea Village (facing page, top) and False Creek Community Centre (below): Once-polluted False Creek has come back to life.

Barry L. Donaldson

Octopus's Garden Revisited



Brian Lang

In the early part of the Twentieth Century, False Creek became an industrial sewer. Sawmills dumped all manner of petroleum products and toxic preservatives into the water. Machine shops dumped or buried their waste products. Chemical leaks were commonplace. The once-lush foreshore was dredged and stuck with pilings and wharves. In 1970, at the twilight of the industrial era on the Creek, there was virtually no sea life to be seen – if you could actually see through the murky water. In the three decades since then, however, the waters have cleared, both literally and in terms of invisible contaminants. The recuperative power of nature, aided by the efforts of developers and the City to remove and contain toxic soils, are jointly responsible. Perch and other fish have made their way back into the Creek in sufficient numbers to draw the occasional great blue heron stalking the shoreline, loon or cormorant riding the chop, or bald eagle sailing on the updrafts. Starfish and mussels cling to the piles, and crabs saunter sideways along the Creek's muddy floor. There have even been reports of salmon attempting to spawn on the rocky shore; they're likely mature fish released in the area as smolts years before by schoolchildren participating in a salmonid enhancement project.

One species that has not fared so well with the revival of False Creek is the German rat. Rats thrive in ports and industrial areas, especially ones in decline. One sawmill located on the Fairview shore immediately opposite Granville Island was called Rat Portage for the daily traffic of rodents during low tide. With the general cleanup and the removal of rotten wooden foundations from most of the Island's buildings, the rat habitat has diminished and the creatures have retreated to areas over the seawall.

Islanders of a Feather

While not an ideal place to see wildlife, the Island is home to several species of birds. The most recognizable are the large glaucus-winged gulls that wheel and scream overhead. The Granville Bridge provides a nesting place – and the market plaza a feeding place, especially in summer – for thousands of city pigeons, properly known as rock doves. Starlings also vie for the visitor's crumbs. Most of these are the common European variety, but keep a lookout for the crested mynah. Unlike the speckled starlings, these distant cousins are a solid black with white patches on their wings, visible when they fly. They also sport a peculiar "crest" or black feather jutting out from the top of their beaks. Originally from China, they were brought to Vancouver around the turn of the century and gained a foothold, although their numbers have been dropping since the arrival on the West Coast of European starlings around 1945. This is the only place in North America where these unusual birds can be found.

canoeing. Micon Products, across Cartwright Street from the community centre, is Granville Island's other pre-1970 tenant. Peer through the rustic sashed windows and you'll see Granville Island as it used to be: a hot, greasy machine shop. Undeterred by its artsy-craftsy neighbours, Micon continues to make drill bits for western Canada's mining and construction industries here.

If you're a kid in the summertime, the focal point of the Island lies midway along Cartwright Street. This is the children's ⑱ Waterpark, which along with the adjacent playground, provides the best fun you can have for free in Vancouver. In fact, the Waterpark holds the title for the busiest free kids' attraction in North America. In winter, the main attraction lies next door, by the Island's main entrance, in the ⑲ Kids Market. Here sellers of atypical toys, books and clothing gather under one roof to offer an imaginative and viable alternative to the big-box stores.

Sandwiched between these two child-centred places is yet another oasis of the performing arts. Vancouver theatregoers all know the ⑳ Waterfront Theatre. Across from it, in the old Columbia Bitulithic Building, the Granville Island administration is developing a permanent administrative home that will centralize services for many Island tenants. The building will house a new information centre for the Island, a centre for developing theatre scripts, a rehearsal space and library of Canadian plays and it will manage seasonal events including the Writer's, Comedy and New Play festivals.

Michael Mong

Sean Jamieson

Before you head back under the Granville Bridge and onto ㉓ Duranleau Street, you can't miss another Island landmark. The ㉒ Granville Island Brewery was British Columbia's first "cottage" brewery and still produces one of its leading craft brews. Legend tells of the first days the brewery opened, when the store had to close early because its production could not keep pace with the demand. In fact, demand outgrew the site, and the commercial brewing operation moved to Kelowna. What remains is a taste-and-test facility, as well as a retail shop.

The entire southwest flank of the Island, between Duranleau Street and the waterfront, comprises the ㉑ Maritime Market. Here, planners hoped, would be a cluster of supply shops and services for fishermen, pleasure boaters and other boat owners. While there are several examples of these, experience taught the Granville Island administration and its master tenant here, Maritime Market Inc., to accept a broader definition of the marine theme. There are kayak shops and instruction centres, seafood restaurants, river

■ **Visitors to Granville Island can expect the unexpected, such as an impromptu parking lot picnic (top) or a nautical display (below, left).**

The Island Outfit

The ideal outfit for strolling Granville Island:

Windbreaker.
There's almost always a breeze. Windproof and waterproof fabrics such as Gore-Tex have become the unofficial uniform of the Pacific Northwest.

Sensible shoes.
Sturdy walking shoes or light hikers that can absorb acres of pavement and brave the occasional puddle will make your day more pleasant.

Sweater or fleece top, gloves.
Advisable from November to March, especially if you plan to get around on the water.

Knapsack or shoulder bag.
Convenient for squirreling away a few exotic groceries or souvenirs.

Sunglasses.
Hey, you never know.

Kim Stallknecht

■ The Trans-Canada trail – a project to celebrate the Millenium – originates at this pavillion in Sutcliffe Park (above).

rafting and exotic tour companies, boat rentals and marine souvenir shops amongst the repair shops and outboard dealers. Regardless, it's a place intriguing to the mariner and land-lubber alike.

On the waterfront side of the Maritime Market lie docks where you can stroll and admire the sometimes lavish yachts tied up here and the more utilitarian (sometimes rustic) fish boats at the adjacent Fisheries and Oceans Canada dock. For a limited number of weeks each year, these trollers and purse seiners head to fishing grounds far up the wild, untamed B.C. coast, returning to lead a more urban existence in the off-season. You can appreciate an age-old and romantic way of life from this small fish port in the heart of the city.

The ㉔ Net Loft, a shopping complex on the right hand side of the street, sets the retail tone for the Island with its quirky collection of specialty shops. The gift items available here are truly one of a kind: exotic papers, alternative greeting cards, custom-built frames for eyeglasses, marbles of every colour and description, hats, housewares, fashions from far and near – some literally made upstairs.

Finally, standing alone at the Island's westernmost point, is ㉕ Bridges Restaurant. Featuring a bar and bistro, Bridges is one of Vancouver's best-known destination restaurants, surrounded as it is on three sides by water. The name of course comes from the view. The Arbutus Rail Bridge that once crossed directly in front of your field of vision is now history, but the looming Burrard and Granville Bridges still make the spot one of the most romantic in the city. The older of the two bridges, the Burrard, remains the busiest in the city. Its grand towers and art-deco electric torchlights were restored in 1986 for the World's Fair. Looking back over the Island, this is actually the third Granville Street Bridge, built in the 1950s to replace a much lower, iron swing-span dating back to 1909.

A short jog to the north returns the visitor to the Public Market. The tour of the main sites and attractions of Granville Island is over, but the real fun – exploring the Island's hidden shops and restaurants and nooks and crannies – is just beginning. Even for locals who have been coming to Granville Island for years, it's a never-ending adventure.

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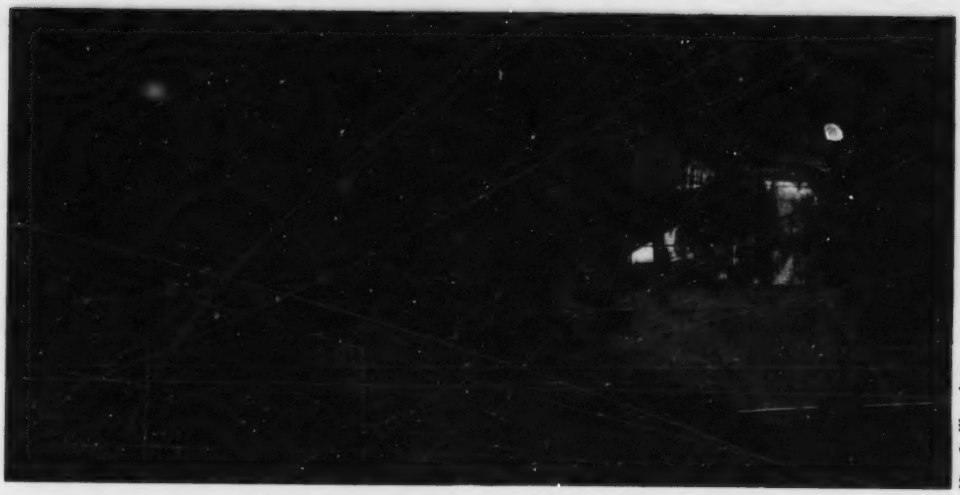

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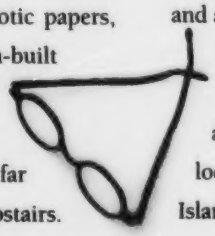

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KIDS' TOP TEN

The 10 best things to see and do with kids on Granville Island:

1. Waterpark. The largest free attraction of its kind in North America, the Waterpark is a rolling expanse of painted pavement overhung with water pipes, sprays and slides, open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. from the Victoria Day weekend in May to the Labour Day weekend in September. The full Waterpark is open weekends, holidays and weekdays in July and August; before the season gets under way the spray park is open weekdays in May and June. There is a special area for toddlers.

2. Adventure Zone. Housed in the Kids Market, the Adventure Zone is a four-storey indoor play structure featuring a slide, ball cage and hours of clambering fun for children aged 4-12.

Chris Brignall

3. Public Market courtyard. There's always something going on outside the Public Market, whether it be clowns entertaining, boats sailing or chugging past or hungry pigeons and seagulls. Inside the Market, children can watch doughnuts or toffee being made. This is one food shopping experience that won't have them saying, "Can we go home now?"

Bill Almond

4. Maritime Market docks. A quieter, more interactive experience for young seafarers, the docks leading down from the Maritime Market give children the chance to explore the many different kinds of boats in False Creek. They can spot fish and other sea life under the pilings, or watch boaters repairing their craft at the drydock.

5. Playgrounds. There are two outdoor playgrounds on Granville Island, one for toddlers at the False Creek Community Centre and a larger one next to the Waterpark featuring old machinery from Granville Island's days of heavy industry.

6. Lagoons. The parkland to the east of the causeway (adjacent to Kids Market) is a favourite for young children as they watch the many waterfowl that call the Island home. They can captain their own tugboat permanently moored next to the Crystal Ark.

7. Cave in Crystal Ark. This gemstone store in a small shed behind the Kids Market has its own indoor "cave" where kids can dig among thousands of colourful, polished stones and mine their favourites. A bag costs $3-10.

8. The Lobster Man. Adults come to this fishmonger's store in the Maritime Market thinking dinner, but for kids it's like a trip to the aquarium, as live crab, lobster and shellfish lie, swim or crawl around in tanks on all sides.

9. Artisans. Children marvel at things being made before their eyes. During the summer months boatbuilder David Bradford opens up the Johnston Street entrance to his Alder Bay Boats shop for all to see. At Studio Glass run by partners New-Small and Sterling on Old Bridge Street, kids can watch glass blowers craft hot glass into jars and bottles. A treat for those with longer attention spans.

Michael Remek

10. Ferry ride. Just a few dollars is all it takes for a family to experience the boating life on False Creek firsthand on the Aquabus or False Creek Ferries, which depart from docks outside the Public Market. You might just find adults enjoy the ride too.

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

The dream

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

CHAPTER 3

THE REINVENTION OF GRANVILLE ISLAND

They were known as the "Barefoot Gang." *A half-dozen young architects, urban economists and planners, they'd gather after hours in the basement of Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners' offices at 1553 Robson Street in the West End. There, huddled over drawings, they'd brainstorm the great projects they would undertake if they ever got the chance. One of those projects was the hypothetical redevelopment of Granville Island.*

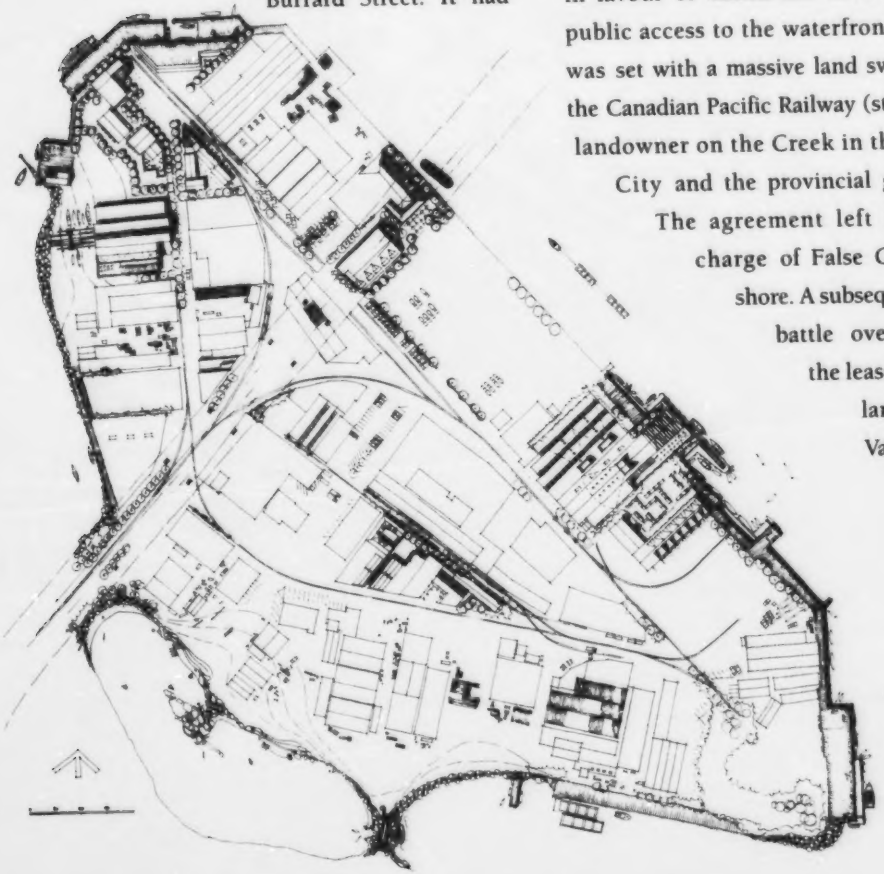
The year was 1972, and in Vancouver at least the tide of 1960s free thinking was still on the rise. In contrast to the urban renewal 'projects' of earlier years, these young thinkers espoused a philosophy embodied in Chris Alexander's book *Pattern Languages*. They believed in continuity, diversity and small scale. They saw in urban areas the opportunity to develop alternative living environments, ones that, for example, welcomed back families then fleeing to the suburbs.

Known as "the firm that built Vancouver," Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners had been the City's pre-eminent architectural firm for four decades. It had designed some of the City's best known landmarks, including the Burrard Bridge and the old B.C. Hydro Building on Burrard Street. It had dragged a once hide-bound building sector into the modern and modernist era. Senior partner Ned Pratt still presided over the firm and the architectural community like an *eminence grise*. Now a new generation, fired up on idealism, turned its attention to the glaring question surrounding False Creek.

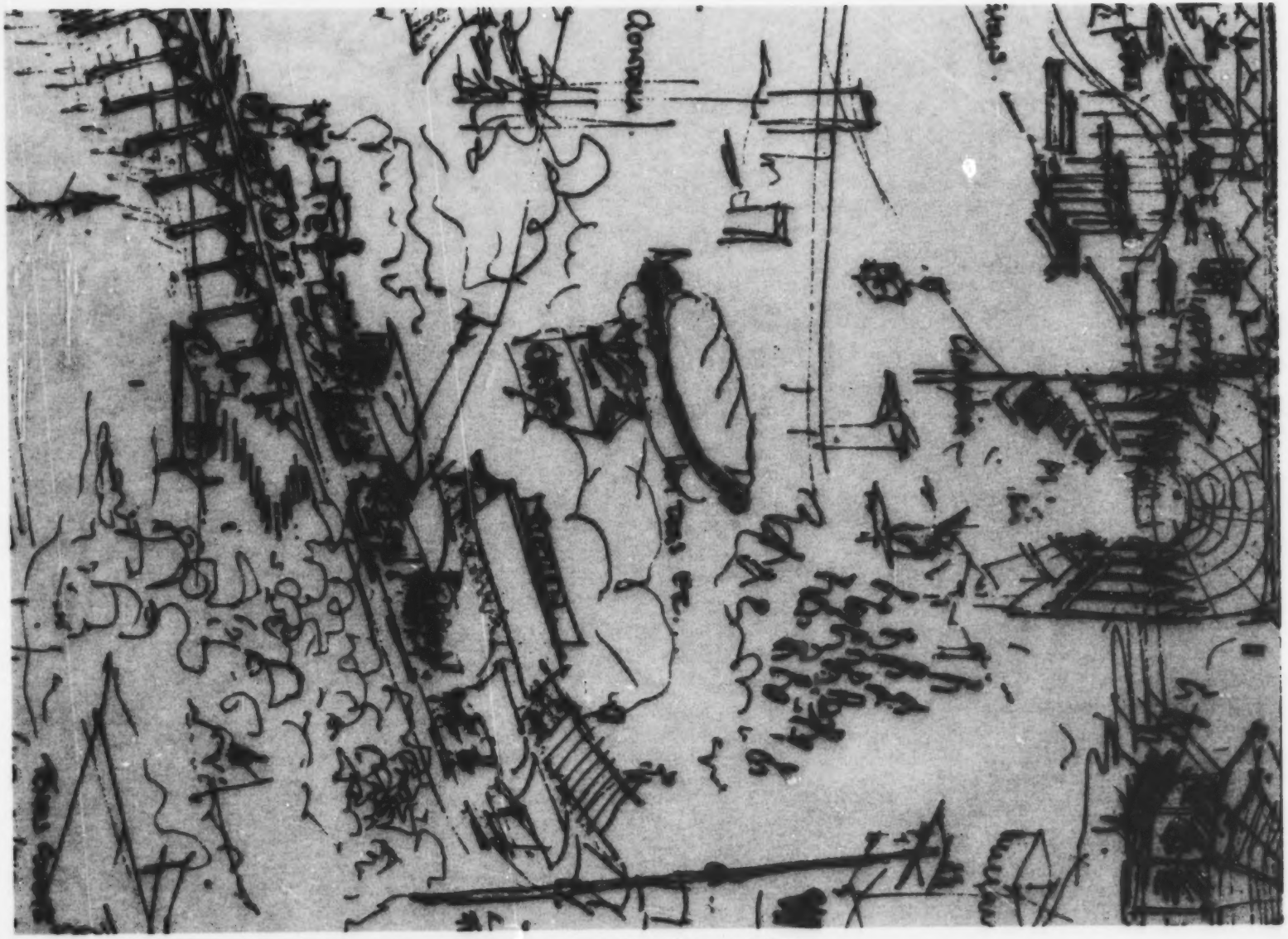
Andrew Klaputiuk

They were not the first to propose redeveloping the area. As far back as 1958, urban geographer and later City councillor Walter Hardwick had proposed evicting the last remnants of heavy industry from False Creek in favour of mixed-use development and public access to the waterfront. The stage was set with a massive land swap between the Canadian Pacific Railway (still the major landowner on the Creek in the '60s), the City and the provincial government. The agreement left the City in charge of False Creek's south shore. A subsequent political battle over extending the lease of the area's largest tenant, Vancouver Iron

■ **Hosing down the Sea Village docks: much of the Island came about by accident.**
■ **Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners' proposals for the Island examined issues such as access (opposite): should the Island revert to being a true Island?**



Drawing from Granville Island a process for redevelopment, *courtesy of Brian Hemingway, Architect*



Granville Island a process for redevelopment, *by Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners (courtesy of Brian Hemingway, Architect)*

Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

and Engineering Works, was won by the mixed-use forces who favoured redevelopment.

Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners won the contract to redesign the False Creek lands in competition with two other firms. It wasn't much of a contest. By the time it came to the table, TBP had already done much of the work. Of the three proposals, TBP's was the most low-key, to be phased in over time and broken up into separate projects, each with separate design and development teams. That way, they reasoned, False Creek South would become not an inner-city project so much as a real, organic neighbourhood.

TBP's plans for False Creek also took on several social policy objectives. They allowed for one-third social housing for people on income assistance, one-third affordable, middle-income housing, and one-third true market housing. It pioneered the concept of using market housing to offset the costs of the social housing on City property, a practice now common not only in Vancouver but around the world. It also helped craft new legislation for housing cooperatives that helped circumvent the financial industry's reluctance to make loans on leased land.

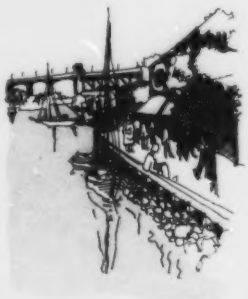
Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

GOING WITH THE FLOW

Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners were knee-deep in False Creek when the federal Urban Affairs ministry came calling with another contract, to study the redevelopment of Granville Island. With all the movement towards cleaning up False Creek, Granville Island had become an embarrassment for the federal government that owned it, not least because it lay within Vancouver Centre, the constituency of Ron Basford, the minister of state for Urban Affairs. Basford's department had just finished redeveloping some waterfront land in Toronto into Ontario Place, a high-tech amusement and educational attraction. Initially at least, Urban Affairs had a similar concept in mind for Granville Island. Basford had ideas of his own, and as time went on he became the driving force for redevelopment.

Kingston Ganong remembers driving over the Granville Bridge with Basford one day in the spring of 1973. Ganong was the B.C. and Yukon regional director for Central Mortgage & Housing at the time, later Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation. "What do you think of the idea of CMHC taking over Granville Island?"

■ Ron Basford (left) led the political fight to redevelop Granville Island. ■ False Creek in 1928 (top). The Island is on the right.



Drawing from Granville Island a process for redevelopment, *courtesy of Brian Hemingway, Architect*

Basford enquired. Ganong was enthused, though this wasn't in the Crown Corporation's usual line of work. CMHC was in the business of financing and building housing for low-income people. What Basford seemed to have in mind had nothing to do with housing.

When Basford thought of Granville Island's future, he liked to use the term "people place." At the time, the Island was anything but. It was an isolated cluster of dilapidated, windowless buildings, surrounded by polluted water. But, as a couple of private developers had already recognized (see sidebar, "The Creekhouse Boys"), it had location and timing on its side. There was an election coming up, and the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau had been bestowing gifts on the constituencies of other members of Parliament. Basford felt that Vancouver Centre was due some federal largesse too. In Granville Island he had a worthy project that would benefit all citizens of Vancouver, and his cabinet colleagues ultimately agreed.

Ross Rowe

Switching the Island's management from the National Harbours Board to CMHC was Basford's way of keeping the project within his purview. CMHC president Bill Teron ultimately reported to him.

Basford and Teron reached an understanding: the revitalization of Granville Island would not be undertaken by the CMHC bureaucracy in Ottawa. It would be run as a separate project by contract employees in Vancouver. Basford hired Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners to conduct a feasibility study. With that report, written by TBP partner Dick Mann, in hand, he obtained an order-in-council that transferred the Island to CMHC and set aside $25 million from government coffers to launch the redevelopment process. A steering committee composed of Ganong, Mann and Urban Affairs representative Sy Rosenberg was set up to direct the process. The committee's first move was to hire a general manager by the name of Russell Brink. Its second was to commission a more detailed planning study from TBP.

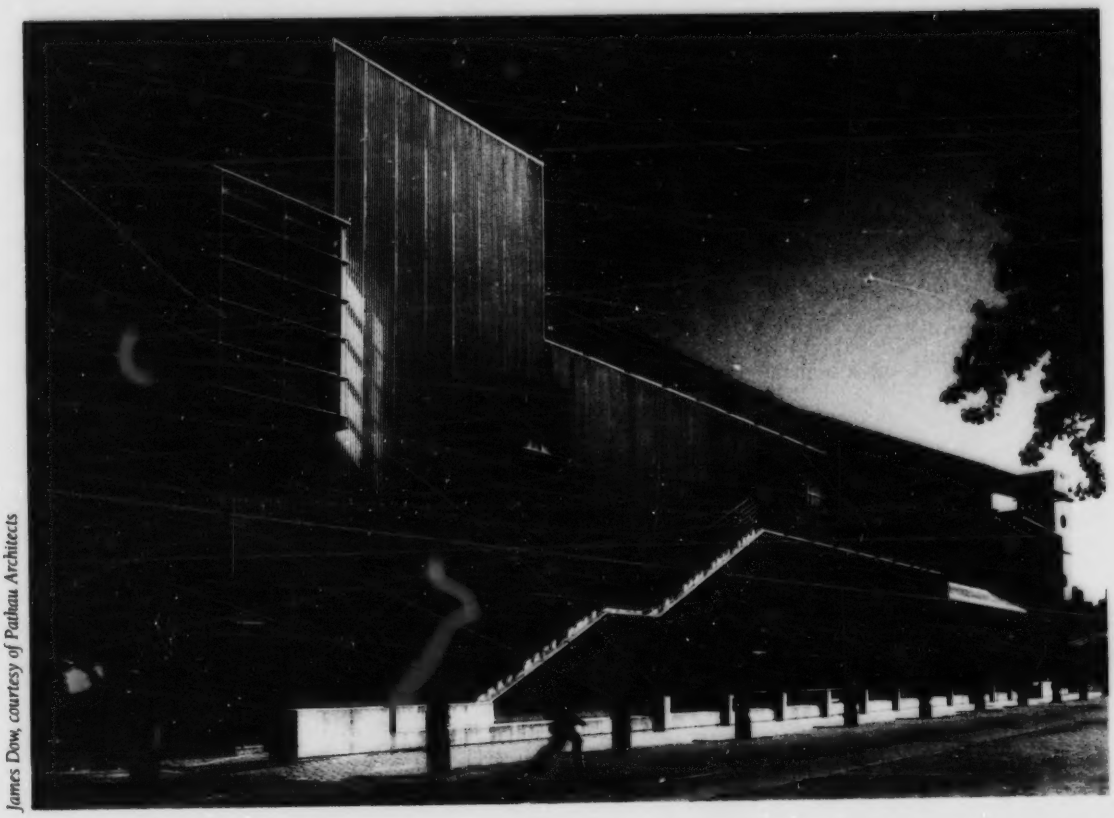
Courtesy of the CMHC

ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Up to this point, the revitalization of Granville Island had been a dream, but Russell Brink was no dreamer. He was a hard-nosed businessman with degrees in business and law and a reputation as a tough negotiator. Rather than operate out of CMHC's regional offices, he found a small shed at the east end of the Island and moved in.

Brink describes the Island in 1975 as "a semi-industrial slum." He had a hard time keeping his clerical help; they seldom stayed long for fear of the rats that roamed the streets. The Morrison Steel & Wire factory next to his office was a grim sight out of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*; its ceiling hung with whirring belt drives, the floor a maze of greased-black machinery, the sullen workers performing repetitive tasks. At the

■ Workers punch the clock at Morrison Steel & Wire Company, 1978 (above). ■ From Granville Island, (left, below) looking beyond the Burrard Bridge to English Bay: few recognized the Island's natural advantages.

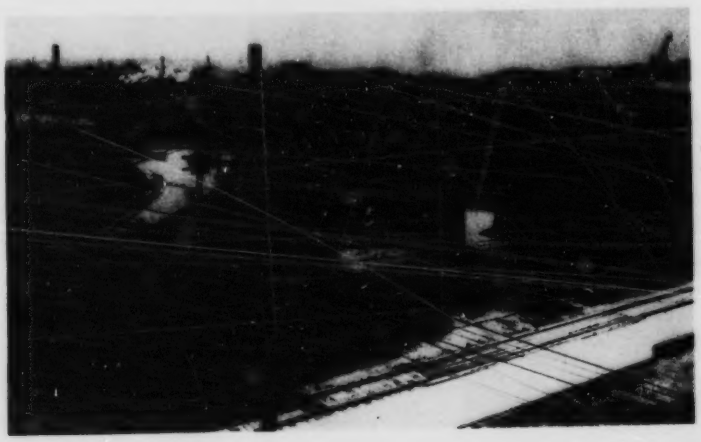


James Dow, courtesy of Patkau Architects

■ The new wing of the Emily Carr Institute went up in 1994, the first major structure built on the Island in half a century.

back of the building lay a pit filled with five decades of rejected nails. At the Canada Chain & Forge shop under the Granville Bridge, blacksmiths still hammered metal coils into massive chain links for pulling barges. Old chain was dipped into a sulphuric acid bath set into the floor to remove the rust. After a number of such baths, the acid would lose its potency and was flushed untreated into False Creek. The very crib of pilings that held Granville Island together was collapsing in places. Long-time tenants such as British Wire Ropes had vacated the premises, their buildings structurally unsound. Others could not afford to move as long as the rent was cheap and the factories functional.

Before any renovation could begin, the leases of these heavy-industrial hangers-on



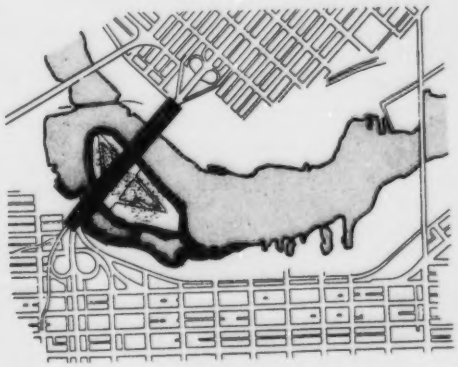
Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives

had to be cleared. Some were ready to move on; others were not. Brink sat through countless meetings with lawyers and accountants to try and determine the compensation for tenants prematurely forced to leave; as well he scouted off-island sites for them. "The value of the lease surrender related to the cost of relocation, so it was in CMHC's interest to find them new homes," Brink explains. In the case of Cleman Towing, a tugboat company, he had to find water frontage suitable for barges. The Port of Vancouver didn't want barge traffic, so property was found on the Fraser River. In time, Cleman saw its customer base around False Creek drying up, and so moved willingly.

A NEW ISLAND EMERGES

While Brink was dealing with Granville Island's past, the architects and planners from Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners were busy devising its future. The Barefoot Gang had been tossing around pie-in-the-sky ideas about Granville Island for years. Now, they had to come up with a comprehensive report in a matter of months. A team of five specialists was assembled under the direction of Richard Rabnett, a brilliant young architect with a bent for planning and policy issues. The team consisted of design-oriented architects, planning-oriented architects, a land-use economist and a student. The firm rented space in the Creekhouse, then the Island's only non-industrial, mixed-use tenant, so the team could immerse itself in the Island environment. The members took the immersion concept to heart, some bringing sleeping bags to the office rather than go home at the end of an 18-hour day.

"We felt strongly as a group that Ontario Place wouldn't work out here," recalls Brian Hemingway, one of the team members who now heads his own architectural firm in Vancouver. If the TBP dreamers had a model, it more resembled the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, with a cultural focus. They wanted to give Granville Island not so much a single land use or combination of uses as a character that was consistent right across the Island. That character would accommodate



Drawing from Redevelopment Strategies for Granville Island

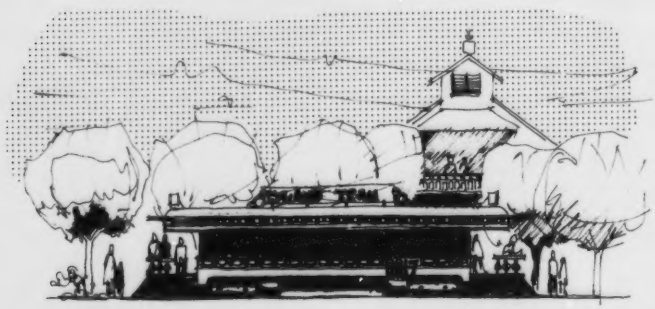
any number of overlapping land uses, and those uses could change over time.

All of these ideas were somewhat ephemeral, so the TBP team's report, entitled *"Granville Island a process for redevelopment,"* proposed five easily grasped "character options." The first option was a park featuring concessions, a museum, a beach, picnic areas and a boardwalk. The second embraced an amusement/recreation theme complete with rides, tennis courts, shops and cafes, a gondola and miniature train. The third saw Granville Island as a locus of culture and entertainment, with theatres and outdoor stages, exhibits and galleries, art studios, and a public gathering space akin to London's Hyde Park Corner. (This third option also suggested a public market.) The fourth character option

Kathryn Hatashita-Lee

combined the cultural theme of the third with an educational element. Here, there would be set design and production spaces for theatre groups, a music school, and a shipbuilding shop. Finally, the fifth option proposed to turn Granville Island into a permanent exposition, not unlike Ontario Place.

The options ranged "from the ridiculous to the bland," Ganong remembers with a smile. Russell Brink, the Island's first general manager, calls it "a typical consultant's report: five options, choose the middle one." True enough, the architectural team members themselves leaned towards the third and fourth options. They saw in Vancouver a lack of space for the business end of visual and performance art and saw in Granville Island an opportunity to nurture that sector. Regardless of the character option the landlord might choose, however, the report suggested some very definite strategies for seeing the dream become reality.



Drawing from Granville Island a process for redevelopment, *courtesy of Brian Hemingway, Architect*

Purely from a design and planning point of view, the TBP team felt Granville Island should keep its insular character. It should be hard to get to and should accommodate a limited number of parking spaces. It

should also maintain its industrial ambience – not literally keeping its industrial land uses so much as keeping its industrial architecture, streetscapes and waterfronts. The uses in fact would be varied and continuous, meaning the Island should be busy from early morning until late in the evening.

Instead of redeveloping the Island all at once, the report recommended an incremental redevelopment. CMHC had $25 million to work with. Simply buying out the leases of the remaining industrial tenants would consume most of that money, with little left over to rebuild infrastructure and develop specific sites. So the TBP team suggested simply allowing the leases to expire and putting that money in the bank, to be used as needed to redevelop the Island over time. Moreover, even after most or all of the industrial tenants had left, the Island would not remain in the same state. It would continually evolve to accommodate the demands of the city around it. While operating on the principle of financial self-sufficiency, it would be a place where desirable non-commercial activities could thrive alongside commercial ones.

Michael Remek

Richard Rabnett, the project leader, had one final recommendation: that a trust be set up to administer the $25 million grant from the federal government and to direct its use in redeveloping the Island. "He knew nothing would happen if it went through the normal planning process," Brian Hemingway says. In order to implement what was, at the time, a radical departure in the world of architecture and real estate development, CMHC needed a group of eminent persons who could give shape to a dream for which there was no precedent. Granville Island would not be redeveloped by survey and referendum but by a measure of enlightened leadership.

A BRAIN TRUST

The Granville Island Trust was a curious and inspired creation. It had little legal authority. The Government of Canada owned the land. CMHC was its designated developer and property manager. As federal property, the Island didn't even come under the jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver. But for political reasons the government in Ottawa did not want to raise its "federal prerogative." It wanted to be seen doing something good for British Columbia, giving Vancouverites something they indeed wanted. It should not look the least bit paternalistic.

By the same token, the City knew that if push came to shove over planning and zoning, CMHC could ultimately do whatever it pleased. Into this legal void stepped the Granville Island Trust, a body with no binding authority, but representation from both sides. The Trust was something everyone could agree on, and so, from its

■ Brilliance in the detail: information panels help orient visitors (opposite); hanging baskets enliven Island wharves (below).

creation in 1976 until it reverted to an advisory role in 1985, it enjoyed a lot of leeway in deciding Granville Island's future. Fortunately, the trustees were up to the task. By all accounts they constituted an extraordinary group of individuals. King Ganong served as the chair, and represented CMHC's interests. From the City of Vancouver came Doug Sutcliffe, the engineer who had helped redevelop the City's False Creek lands. The other original appointees were Helen Patterson, executive secretary of the Employers' Council of B.C.; Geoff Massey, a former City councillor and architect in partnership with Arthur Erickson; and Jonathan Baker, a lawyer and social planner who would go on to serve a long tenure on City council.

Barry L. Donaldson

Courtesy of Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd.

The Trust would be augmented through the late 1970s by the likes of Charles Flavelle, chief executive officer of Purdy's Chocolates; social planner Maurice Egan; planner Michael Plunkett; ex-CMHC vice-president Ian MacLennan; and, following the death of Doug Sutcliffe, the City's social planning director, Max Beck. But from the beginning the trustees had a wide range of experience in terms of business acumen, public relations and political connections. As a group, they were both practical and imaginative, and contributed in a large part to the success of Granville Island. "What you see today is a manifestation of the quality of the trustees," says Phil Boname, a consultant brought in by the Trust to fashion a business plan for the Island.

Through the early 1980s Boname would help the Trust come up with the mix of tenants to occupy the Island. Early on, the Trust established a few guiding principles. First, the redevelopment had to be self-sustaining financially. There would be no more capital funding beyond the $25-million start-up grant, so any social policy objectives the Island might fulfill had to be paid for through its own market activities. Second, the Island would adhere to Basford's vision of a "people place." It would provide a home for activities squeezed out of other places in the City. Third, the Island would retain its early Twentieth Century industrial character, not only for nostalgic, esthetic and educational reasons, but also for financial ones. Budgetary limitations did not allow for wholesale change, unless the Island

was leased to large commercial developers, and that violated the other guiding principles. "The whole exercise from day one involved trade-offs," Boname says.

Drawing from Redevelopment Strategies for Granville Island

CMHC made no move to evict four old-time tenants: Morrison Steel, Canada Chain & Forge, Micon Products and Ocean Cement. All had leases extending well into the future. The first three, the Trust felt, served as a link to the Island's past that was nonetheless compatible with the new vision. The decision to keep Ocean hinged on other considerations. It was partly due to concern that evicting Ocean would leave rival Lafarge Cement with a monopoly over cement production in downtown Vancouver, which might hurt the City's construction industry. But the big factor in the decision to retain Ocean was financial. It was the largest lot on the Island, and its lease ran until 2004. To buy that out, Brink says, "There wouldn't have been any money to redevelop the Island."

DOLLARS AND COMMON SENSE

Even as existing tenants proved slow to leave, there were literally hundreds of non-profit agencies, associations and institutes lining up looking for shelter. Overriding both was the imperative to create a traffic-generating anchor that would keep the shops and restaurants busy and produce the cash flow to finance the non-commercial activities. That anchor, first proposed in Rabnett's report and endorsed by Phil Boname, would be the Public Market.

"It was the Pied Piper of the Island," Boname says. It would be located in the old B.C. Engineering Works at the northernmost point on the Island, farthest from the entrance, so that shoppers would be drawn past shops, restaurants and secondary attractions on their

■ **Opposite page: Duranleau streetscape (top) leads to ferry dock for False Creek Ferries; Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. yard (bottom).**
■ **The False Creek Community Centre (below) faces Alder Bay: the only such facility with its own dock.**

Toni Alexander

THE CREEK

Stephan Giles

■ Mitch Taylor and Bill Harvey began redeveloping Granville Island buildings before anyone else. The Creekhouse (top) and the Keg old building (opposite) and page 36, the Keg today.

By the time federal politicians and civil servants committed to redeveloping Granville Island, a couple of young entrepreneurs had, in a small way, already beat them to it. In 1970 Mitchell Taylor, a junior executive with Imperial Oil ripe for a new posting, was looking to start a business that would allow him to stay in Vancouver. Bill Harvey worked for the Royal Bank of Canada. Taylor was a straight-laced business type; Harvey was more of a dreamer. But they got along well together and forged a business partnership. The two spent some time in the late 1960s examining waterfront redevelopments down the west coast of the United States: Seattle, Los Angeles, Newport Beach, San Pedro, San Francisco. They saw a growing niche in marinas and resort developments, and wanted to build the same kind of thing in Vancouver.

Just before Christmas, 1971, Taylor had already been promoted to Imperial's head office in Toronto when Harvey flew east to make a presentation. He had found a site in Vancouver, he said. It was a cluster of four vacant buildings leased by the multinational chemical company Monsanto on Granville Island, immediately under the Granville Bridge. The Island was a seedy place, Taylor remembers. But the site was something of a rarity in Vancouver at the time, literally on the salt chuck. Monsanto agreed to sell the buildings for $18,000, and Creekhouse Development, as Taylor and Harvey called their partnership, assumed the lease from the National Harbours Board. The lease ran for another eight years.

Right off the bat they encountered problems. Their application to build a marina was turned down. The banks wouldn't lend them money because the lease period was so short and could be called on 30 days' notice. But Taylor and Harvey persevered. Rather than rebuild on the site, they opted to simply renovate the corrugated-metal barns and maintain their rustic character. They raised more money from four new partners and set up an office in the smallest of the four buildings, a 600-square-foot shed on the waterfront next to the Ocean Building Supplies yard. Though the National Harbours Board was indifferent to their redevelopment plans, the City of Vancouver was eager to transform all of False Creek and readily granted the rezoning of the Creekhouse project.

Among the new tenants would be a restaurant, several private architects' and designers' offices, a painters' studio and a couple of wholesale outlets. There was a countercultural atmosphere to the venture as builders, design professionals and entrepreneurs, virtually all in their 20s and early 30s, set up camp amid the grizzled factory

workers of Granville Island. The Creekhouse people were notorious for their pot-smoking cigarette breaks on the grassy patch between their buildings and their parties every Friday night in the Creekhouse Restaurant. Taylor recalls one of the carpenters, a Polish-born bon vivant known simply as Walter, who used to uncap all the beer bottles early in the evening to ensure that every one would be consumed before the night was through.

The Creekhouse gang came together with Island old-timers at the Granville Island Cafe on Cartwright Street, or vicariously through the gossip of Domenic Lecky, a forklift driver who worked at a school supply business located at the entrance to the Island. From this vantage point Lecky could tell you at any time who was on the Island. Every so often, factory workers wandered down to the Creekhouse to buy a painting or two from the resident artists, Mabel Margets and Mary Pifer. In time these two decided to open a gallery on the ground floor. (Margets and Pifer retired in 1996 – both, by then, in their 80s – but the Creekhouse Gallery remains.)

A year after acquiring the Creekhouse, Taylor and Harvey found another business selling out of the Island, McIntosh Fuel Supply. Lining up the growing Keg & Cleaver restaurant chain as a tenant, they bought that building and its lease for $25,000 in 1973. Still, those first years were hard, Taylor remembers. They charged just $1.50 per square foot in rent (the same Creekhouse units rent for more than 10 times that today). Though the restaurants attracted an avant-garde crowd of young professionals to the Island, there were no retail tenants to speak of. Sometimes restaurant patrons had a hard time just getting to the door, as trains shunted back and forth along the B.C. Hydro Railway line on Johnston Street.

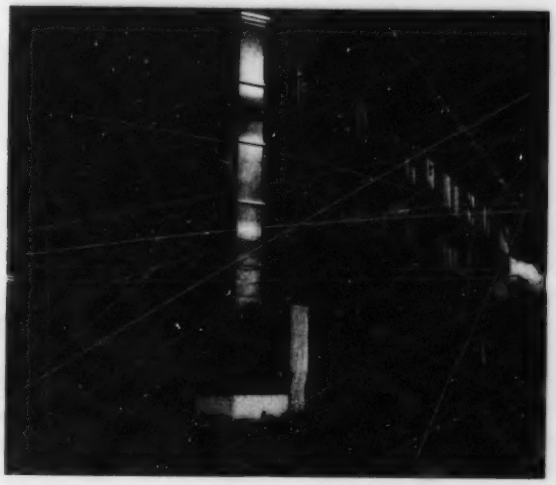
The federal government's 1975 decision to redevelop the Island and transfer title from the National Harbours Board to Central Mortgage & Housing (now Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation) came as a godsend to the Creekhouse. For one thing, it meant more security for the leases, and therefore easier bank financing. For another, it would bring more people to the Island, especially with the opening of the Public Market in 1979. By then the Creekhouse had a new restaurant owned by an experienced restaurateur, Bud Kanke. Kanke called it Mulvaney's and gave it a funky New Orleans theme. Taylor and Harvey went on to open Canada's first micro-brewery in the old school-supply building in 1981. At first, liquor regulations required that the Granville Island Brewing Company sell all its beer on-site. Even with this one distribution channel, the stock sold out before closing every day during its first week of operation. Now owned by alcoholic beverage conglomerate Cascadia Brands, Granville Island Brewing remains one of the largest micro-brew operations in British Columbia, though its main brewery has moved to Kelowna.

Courtesy of the CMHC

As Harvey tired of the demands of business life in the 1980s, he and Taylor parted ways. Success with Granville Island allowed Mitch Taylor to follow his dream to get into the marina business. Though his False Creek Marina, located on the north shore of the Creek near the Cambie Bridge, was expropriated for Expo 86, Taylor has gone on to develop more than 100 waterfront projects in several countries. He remains, with early backer Bud Jones, co-owner of the Creekhouse.

Drawing from Redevelopment Strategies for Granville Island

way there. Still, basing the Island's livelihood on a Public Market was taking a big risk. A young City without a lot of open space, Vancouver never had a history of farmers' or fishermen's markets. A Public Market in Gastown was at that very moment on the verge of collapse. So great was the need to do things right, CMHC opted to build and operate the Public Market on its own, rather than entrust it to an outside developer.



Courtesy of the CMHC

■ **Hotson's plans (opposite, top) specified maintaining the large loading-bay doors, as on the Granville Island Brewery (bottom).**

"Granville Island is a shopping mall. It's designed as such. It meets all the requirements of a shopping mall," opines Russell Brink. "Gastown is a strip mall. It is linear, not congregating." If so, the Island needed more than this one anchor tenant. It needed something compatible with the Island's character that would draw different people for different reasons than the Public Market would. This would be an educational institution, Boname and the Trust agreed. At first they tried to attract a marine college, which opted instead to move to North Vancouver. The runner-up was the Vancouver School of Art, which lay scattered in several locations around the City, and needed a single campus. The school's budget was tight, but they managed to work out a deal where CMHC guaranteed construction costs over and above the school's budget.

As it turned out, the second-best choice would be the better choice. The renamed Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design far outgrew the now-defunct marine institute. What's more, Emily Carr complemented and nurtured the artisan community earmarked for the Island. Boname's retail vision called for a focus on arts and crafts. There would also be a Maritime Market to serve the needs of boaters, along with theatres and offices for performing arts groups, both for-profit and not.

Boname's greatest contribution, however, was not the mix of businesses and uses for the Island; that would ever change. It was instead a formula for calculating lease rates. The mix of tenants and their capacity to pay ranged all over the map. Boname came up with a percentage rent provision where, instead of a fixed rent, CMHC charged a reasonable percentage of either the tenant's gross or net revenue. That way, non-profit associations could thrive alongside highly profitable restaurants or boutiques. That way, CMHC shared the new tenants' risk as well as their reward, and at the end of the day CMHC made more than enough money to cover its operating expenses.

THE ARCHITECT

While Boname formulated the business plan and vetted proposals from incoming tenants, CMHC needed an architect to serve the same purpose on a design level, crafting an overall physical plan for the Island and evaluating tenants' plans for redevelopment. Unfortunately for Thompson, Berwick, Pratt

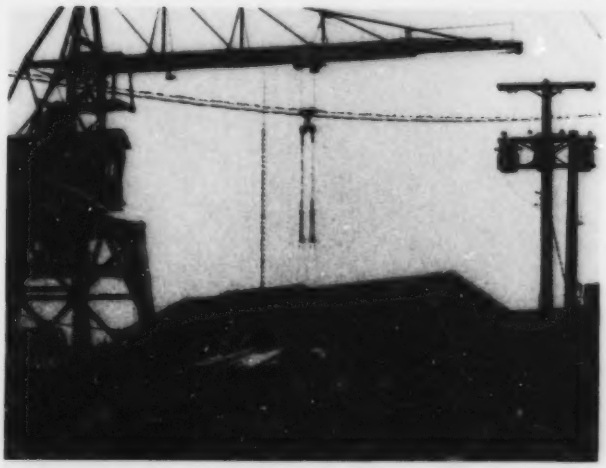
Bill Almond

& Partners, government practice was to spread the work around as much as possible on such projects. Having done the original feasibility and planning work, TBP would not be eligible for the more detailed architectural work to come. That would go to a young architect who had done work with the firm and gone on to form a partnership with Joost Bakker. His name was Norman Hotson.

Courtesy of Hotson Bakker Architects

Hotson had a job with no precedent. "No one had ever recycled a whole industrial precinct before, and changed it over to public use at that time. To that extent we were breaking new ground," he says. "There was no one model we could look at."

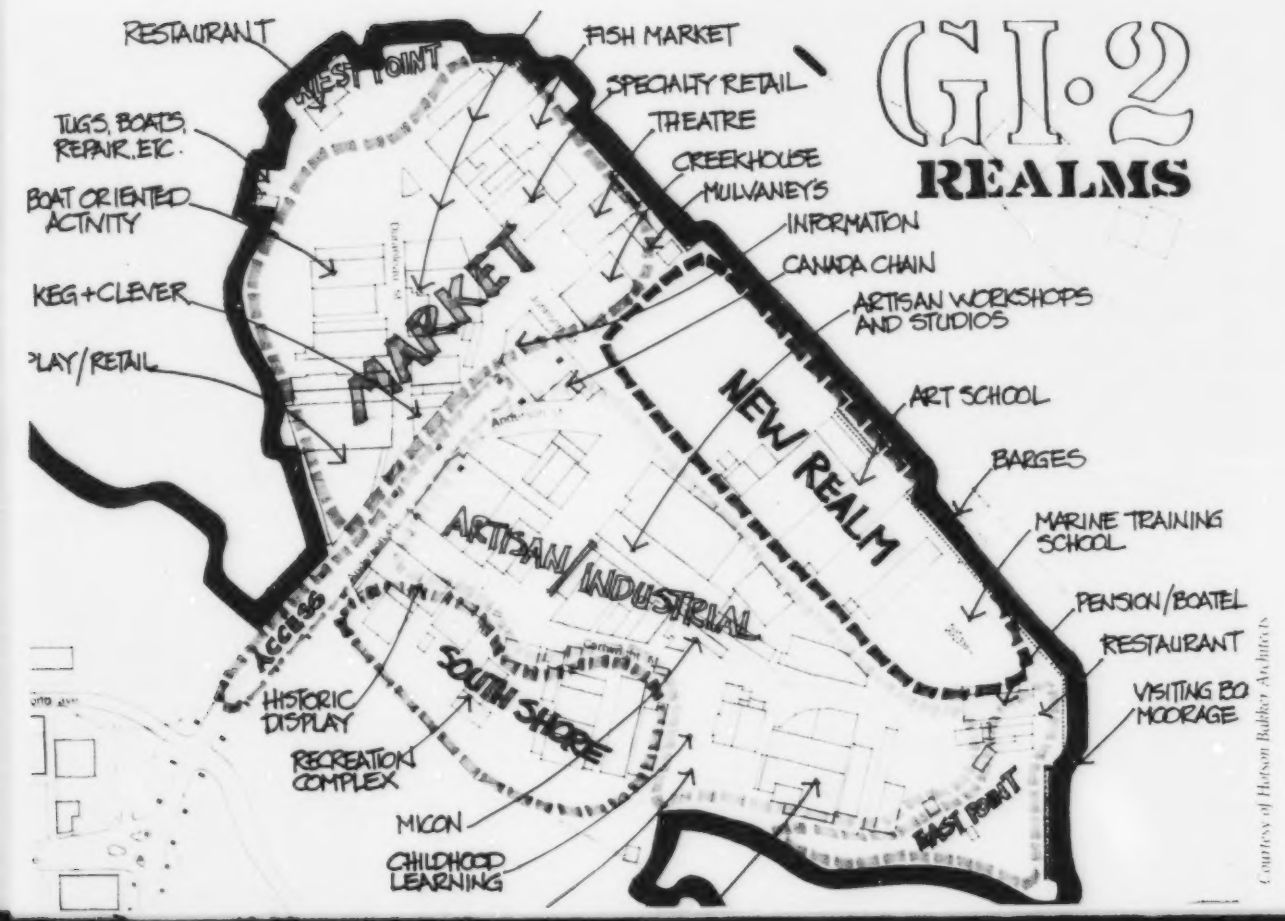
Of course, the notion of recycling old buildings was not new. It had already been done successfully on two sites in San Francisco alone: Ghirardelli Square and The Cannery. These, however, represented single buildings or plots of land, not a 35-acre Island covered by 40-odd leases. Seattle's Pike Place Market was being renovated around the same time as Granville Island, but it had already been a market for 80 years. It was not a complete rededication of a space as the Island would be.



Courtesy of the CMHC

Hotson and Bakker brought to the mix of models and visions for Granville Island their own extensive travels in Europe. From market squares in small French villages to Las Ramblas, a mixed automobile and pedestrian street in downtown Barcelona, they observed what makes for a good street, what mix of tenants and uses and architecture might be brought together to create an animated public space.

They liked the way car traffic was tamed in streets built long before the age of the automobile. The European streets were seamless thoroughfares for all kinds of traffic, with no clearly defined zones for driving, parking or walking. Hotson liked the way a space might be used in different ways depending on the season, the day of the week or month, and the time of day. For example, a town square might provide parking on weekdays, but be taken over by market stalls on the weekend.



Courtesy of Hotson Bakker Architects

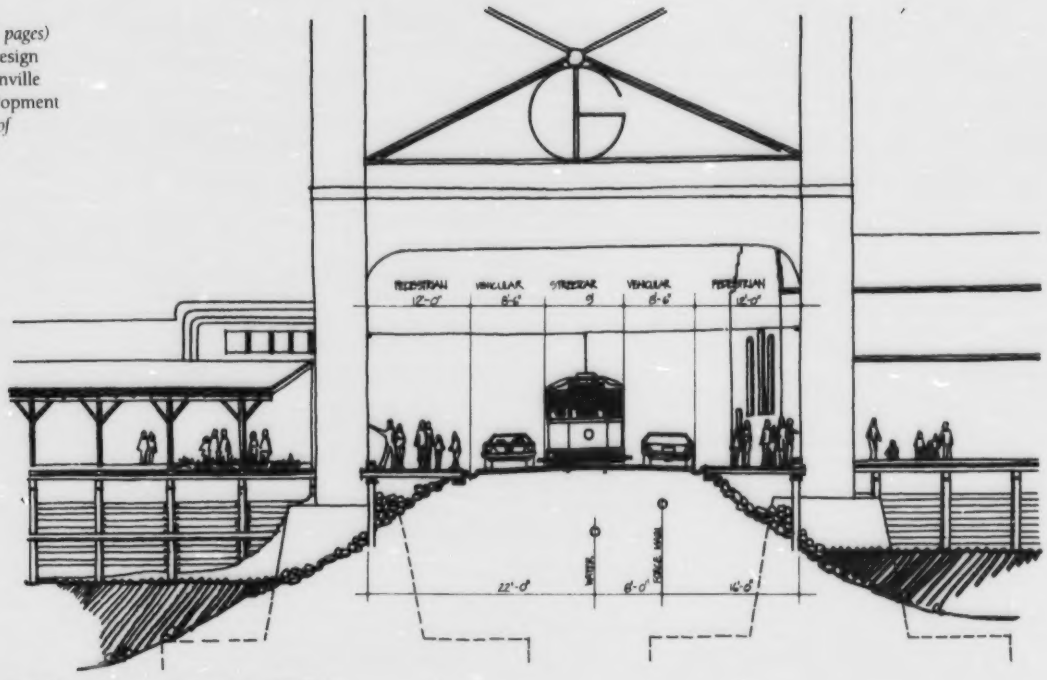
Most of all, the transition was informal – not governed by rules, signs, bylaws and police officers. It was the way the community satisfied its needs.

Hotson made these two principles – the recycling rather than redevelopment of the site, and the making of a good streetscape – the dominant themes of his renovation plan. On the recycling front, he sought to retain not only the buildings themselves where possible, but also the way they were arranged: in a linear fashion radiating from the triangular street grid to the water's edge, and in a more amorphous storage-space mode at the Island's centre. He sought to keep the "matter-of-factness" of the buildings, avoiding any new architectural statements. On the interiors, the heavy timbers holding up the buildings would remain visible, not covered up by ceilings. If the building featured a big door or opening for trucks to drive in and out, that break in the expanse of wall would be maintained, even if filled by a frosted window. As for lighting, the old, industrial Granville

Courtesy of Aldrich/Pears Associates Ltd.

■ Opposite: Joost Bakker (left) and Norman Hotson (right). ■ The Island landscape in transition (top). ■ tenants had to cope with mud, rats and water main breaks (bottom, left). ■ Hotson's plan (left) drew from his travels in Europe.

Drawings (both pages) from Urban Design Summary, Granville Island Redevelopment Plan, *courtesy of Hotson Bakker Architects*



Section A-A Entrance Bridge

Island was a relatively dark place. Hotson wanted to keep it that way, lighting the streets with many low-wattage incandescent bulbs. Large, backlit, commercial signs would not be tolerated.

As for the streets, they would be paved not with asphalt but with huge concrete paviours, which not only harkened back to industrial molding but also resembled the concrete typically used on sidewalks. The pedestrian would rule Granville Island, and the car would be an intruder. There would be very little in the way of curb and gutter, adding to the deliberate confusion between where the foot and rubber-tire traffic ought to tread. The old rail tracks would continue to run down the centre of the road, even though trains might never roll here again.

■ **Hotson's plans for the causeway under Granville Bridge (top), the bridge today (bottom).**
■ **Early drawings for the Public Market featured three floors of selling space (opposite). Only the ground floor is open to the public today. Upper floors are occupied by offices and storage space.**

Andrew Klapatiuk

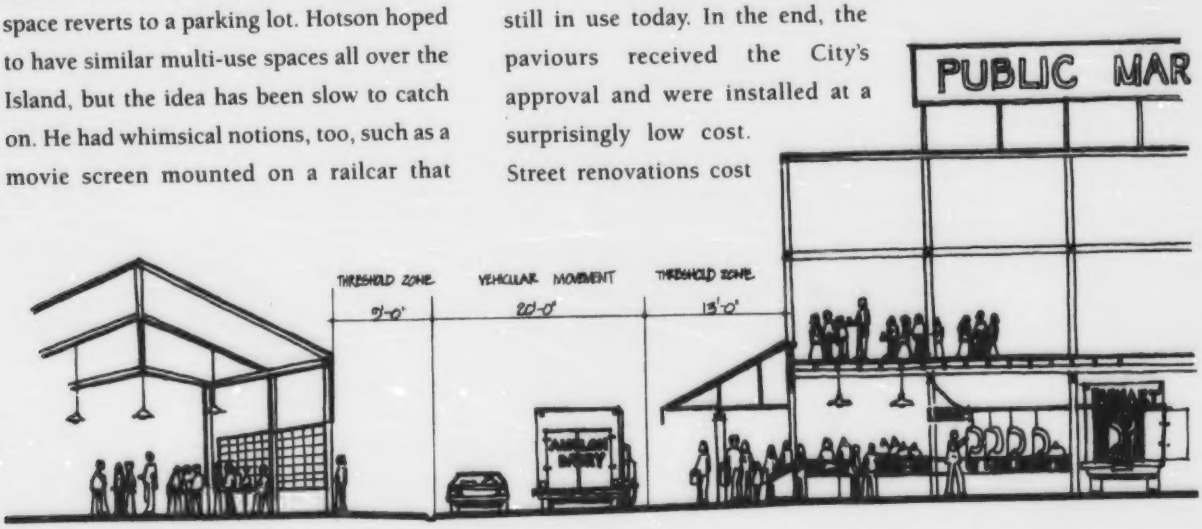
Instead of streetlights, the Island's roads would be lined by wooden posts, reminiscent of the piles holding the island up. Finally, in one entirely new architectural element introduced to the Island, brightly

painted piping would line the streets, providing places to hang lighting fixtures, tie down rain canopies, lock bikes or just provide the pedestrian a refuge away from cars. The colour of these "lintels" would instantly orient the visitor to the part of the Island where he or she was walking: red for the Public Market, blue for the Maritime Market. This primary palate, unheard-of in the white, brown and grey tones of almost all developments in Vancouver to date, was meant to compensate for the City's often grey, overcast natural light. Granville Island would be a lively place in the sun and in the rain.

Courtesy of Aldrich/Pears Associates Ltd.

Not everything Hotson envisioned came to fruition. He also had ideas that never saw the light of day. For example, farmers can sell their seasonal products on certain days out of the backs of trucks parked in front of the Arts Club Theatre. At other times, this space reverts to a parking lot. Hotson hoped to have similar multi-use spaces all over the Island, but the idea has been slow to catch on. He had whimsical notions, too, such as a movie screen mounted on a railcar that might move around the Island to screen films at different locations. This never got off the drawing board. A third concept, to use some of the old boxcars left on the Island as artists' studios, may yet happen as renovation proceeds along Railspur Alley.

By and large, however, the Trust accepted and encouraged Hotson's ideas. "We've never had a client that was so open and willing to take risks," the architect says. Some features, such as the concrete paviours, "took one hell of a sales job." City engineers, who had considered the paviours for the redevelopment of Gastown a decade earlier, worried they would chip, that they would sink in the sand, that they were not suited to the cool, damp, Northwest Coast climate. Russell Brink countered that paviours on the docks of German North Sea ports had stood up to the punishment of loading Panzer tanks during the Second World War, and were still in use today. In the end, the paviours received the City's approval and were installed at a surprisingly low cost. Street renovations cost



■ (Opposite) boat yard at the Maritime Market: maintaining the city's connection to the sea.

David Cooper

just $4.50 per square foot, compared to $16 the City of Vancouver paid to rebuild historic Gastown a decade earlier.

SHOWDOWN AT FALSE CREEK

"The City had little faith in what we were trying to do," Phil Boname recalls. Things got testy during the public consultation and rezoning phase in 1978. Trustee Geoff Massey and Councillor George Puil almost came to blows outside City council chambers. The major bone of contention was the City's demand for more open space. To City planners and engineers, that meant conventional parkland. The Trust and the contractors working on the Island used a broader definition, taking in the streets, parking lots, docks and plazas. Every square inch of public space was measured. Exasperated at one meeting, a trustee asked City planning director Ray Spaxman, "If they painted the tops of the lighting posts green, would they qualify?"

The first public meeting turned into "a real donnybrook," Boname says. Every special interest group that had been overlooked in the Island's land-use allocation was out in force, dumping on the federal government. As a result, the Island added child care facilities, a children's Waterpark and more green space to the plans.

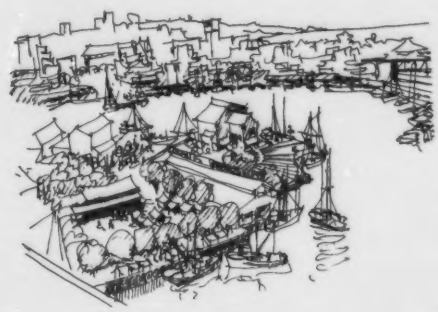
Brink was close to quitting. He had seen his share of crises and battles on the Island. A year earlier, B.C. Tel's new phone line to Seattle, which traversed the Island, was cut off when the rotting wooden conduit it ran through collapsed. Another time he got a phone call from the manager at Mulvaney's restaurant in the Creekhouse. During the renovations a water main had sprung a leak. Now an eight-inch-deep pool lay between customers with reservations and the restaurant's door. City engineers claimed streets were too narrow, so there would not be enough distance between water and sewer lines. Another mysterious leak that threatened to turn the west end of the Island into a mud pie turned out to be a long-ignored natural spring.

Now, on top of it all, the political fight was going badly. Then something caught Brink's eye. A concise editorial in the *Vancouver Sun*

Stephan Giles

(whose publisher, Stu Keate, happened to be the brother of Ed Keate, president of the Downtown Businessmen's Association and one of the Island's leading detractors). Instead of joining the chorus of boos, however, the short piece urged Brink and the rest of the Granville Island braintrust to keep up the fight. The Island, the item ran, might turn out to be one of the finest and most imaginative assets the City ever had. Brink took heart and renewed his commitment to the project.

The Trust took the step of hiring Alan Clapp to organize a presentation for the second and final public meeting at Kitsilano Secondary School. Clapp was a producer of promotional films who had experience developing small craft markets in several municipalities. In fact, he had worked on a proposal presented by Marathon Realty (the real estate arm of the Canadian Pacific Railway) to redevelop the old Canadian Woodpipe & Tank factory on the north shore of False Creek into a craft market. That building mysteri-



Drawing from Redevelopment Strategies for Granville Island

ously went up in flames before the renovation started, but the plans later fell into the hands of the Island's architects, and contributed to their thinking.

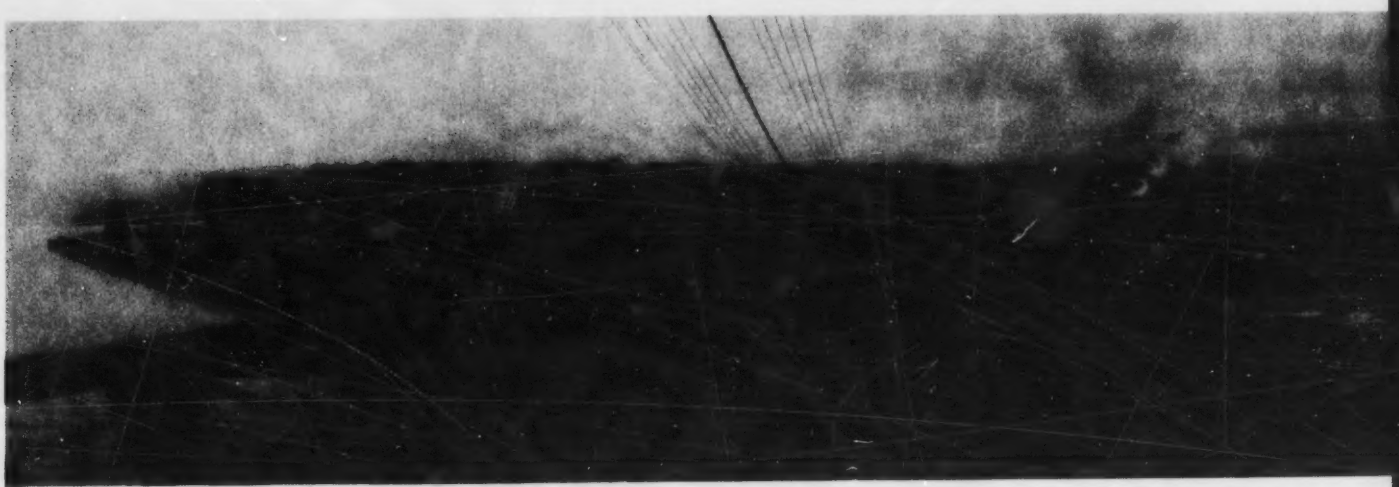
Courtesy of Aldrich/Pears Associates Ltd.

Now Clapp was asked to help shift the political momentum back in the Islanders' favour. First, he lined up supporters among the City's arts groups looking for a home on the Island. Second, he travelled to markets in Los Angeles and Seattle, and put together a seductive audio-visual presentation of the Island's future, to present at the meeting. Finally, he ensured that the Island's supporters signed up the first 35 time slots to speak on the project. By the time the critics took the stand, most of the audience had gone home. In the ensuing weeks the public and several City councillors came out in support of the redevelopment application. "In the end we got most of what we wanted from the City," Brink says. By the summer of 1978, restoration work on buildings such as the new Public Market could finally proceed.

Still, Granville Island's success was far from assured. The handful of new restaurants and retailers already located there were having a hard time of it. The public at large just couldn't tell you how to get to the Island. But that changed with the opening of the Public Market. It was the Island's biggest risk, and also its greatest triumph. From the day it opened in the summer of 1979, the Granville Island Public Market has been a standout success. Its popularity forced CMHC to double the number of parking stalls originally planned for the Island.

The experience, Norman Hotson says, taught him "the importance of bringing together a set of functions [or] land uses that would draw people – and let's face it, the Market is the big draw – and put it into a physical setting that would click." Since

■ **The Mound (top): from pavement to public amenity.**
■ **Granville Island rises from mudflats beneath the second (1909) Granville Bridge, 1917 (bottom).**
■ **Hotson's plan for The Mound, at the east end of the Island (opposite).**

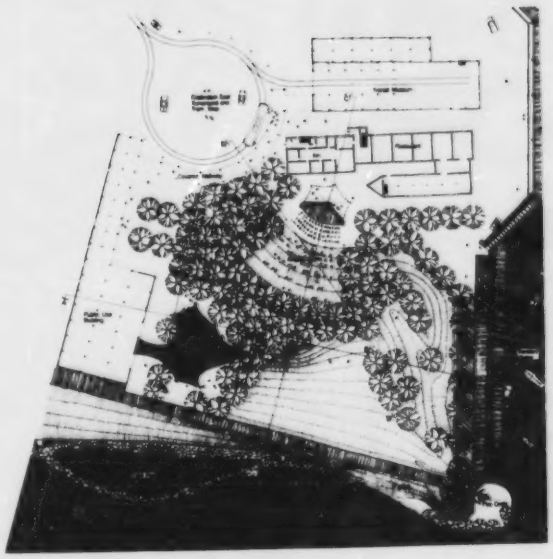


Canadian Photo Co., courtesy of the CMHC

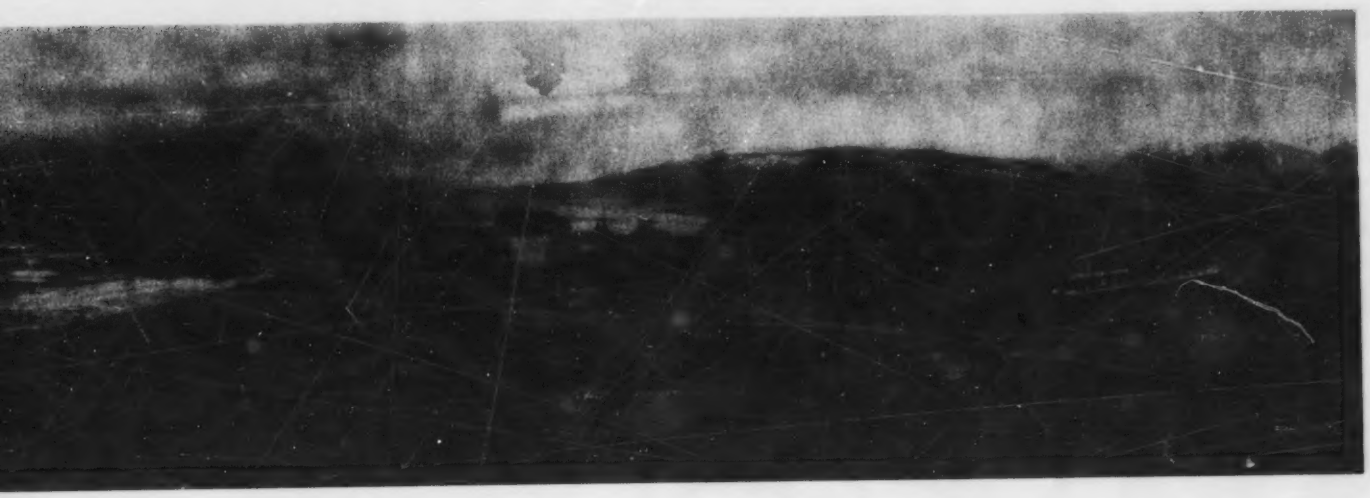
cutting his teeth on Granville Island, Hotson has gone on to work on some 30 markets, from a marine village in Australia to the Forks Market in Winnipeg, on the merits of his Granville Island work. He even studied the feasibility of a market at London's Canary Wharf, before that project was shelved. He found the Granville Island experience impossible to replicate. "We opened up a piece of waterfront in Vancouver that didn't exist for the public before," he says. "Somehow it clicked. It was an incredible setting, and a really exciting land use. [We] developed, physically, the right solutions for the integration of those two facts."

At the end of five years, in the early '80s, the Granville Island Trust did something unheard-of among public projects. It returned $5.5 million to the federal treasury. The capital cost of the renovation totalled $19.5 million, well below the $25 allocated. The Island had been done; the public said it was good, and it was self-sustaining from then on.

The real measure of Granville Island's success, however, the realization of the dreams of Ron Basford, Richard Rabnett, Phil Boname, Norman Hotson, the members of the Trust and the Barefoot Gang and so many others, lay in whether people came to the Island and enjoyed the experience, not just on summer weekends when the sun was out, but all year 'round in all weather. Does Granville Island have enough going for it to attract more than fairweather visitors? As Russell Brink once put it, "It's Monday. It's January 15. It's raining. Is anybody home?" For two decades now, the answer to that question has been, "Yes."



Drawing from Urban Design Summary, Granville Island Redevelopment Plan, *courtesy of Hotson Bakker Architects*



Anything but routine

Ross Rowe

CHAPTER 4

A DAY IN THE LIFE

3:30 am *Bakers arrive at the Public Market. Across the street at La Baguette et L'Echalotte, head baker Thu Ngyen has been hard at work since 10:30 the night before, firing up the ovens, preparing the dough for some 80 different types of bread. Now, with the ovens up to an even 180°C, he and three assistants load the ovens for the first of possibly 15 times today. The first batch, destined for the wholesale trade (restaurants and hotels) comes out of the ovens at 7 a.m. The pastry chefs arrive around 5 a.m. to prepare, bake and glaze the croissants and danishes, sold out of the store when it opens at 8.*

Sandra Laird

6:00 AM

Street sweepers begin making the rounds, cleaning the streets and parking lots of dust, litter and other debris before cars start streaming onto the Island, around 9 o'clock. Jerry Freeman, manager of Bonnie Lee Charters, escorts the first group of the day onto one of his 10 boats moored at the Maritime Market docks. Depending on the season, Freeman takes the group out to fishing holes around the bell buoy off Spanish Banks, Point Atkinson or Sunset Cove in Howe Sound for a five-hour tour.

6:30 AM

Bart Bigford pulls into a parking spot outside Micon Products after a one-hour commute from his home in Abbotsford. He opens up the office, turns on the lights, fires up the compressor, lights the furnaces and opens all the windows and doors. Then he makes the day's first pot of coffee. The rest of the drill-making crew files in by 8 a.m.

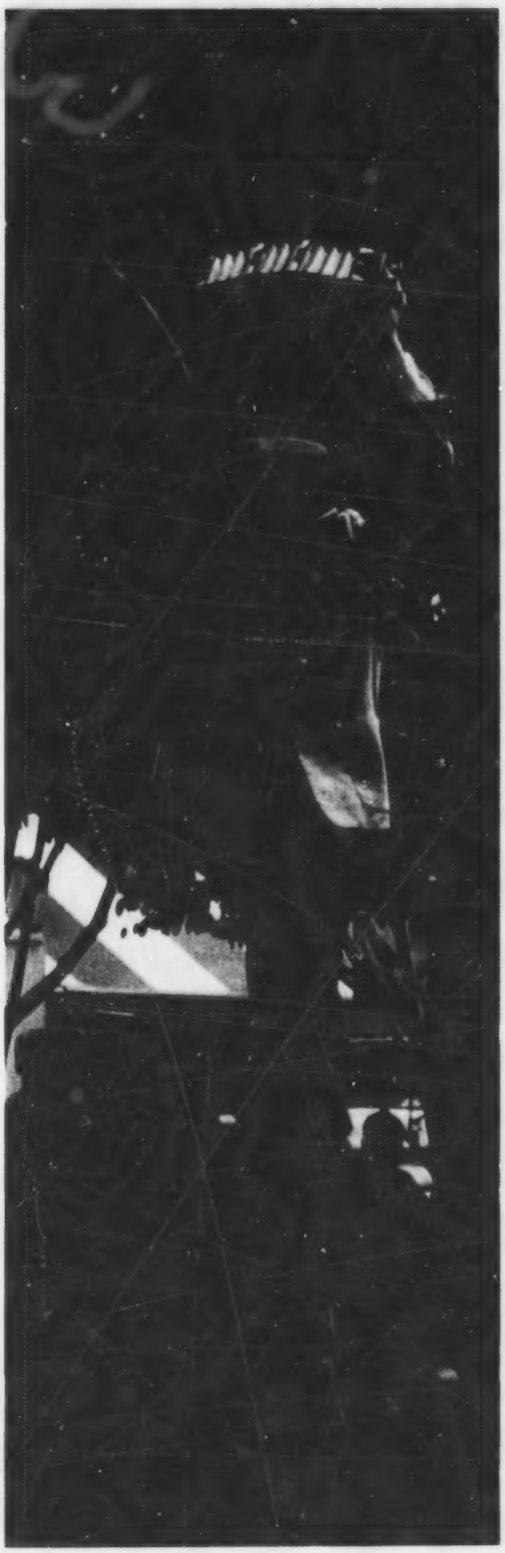
7:00 AM

A lone schoolteacher waits at the English Bay ferry dock to catch the Aquabus to the Island. She works at the Vancouver School Board offices nearby on 10th Avenue. If she misses the ferry, there's hell to pay.

■ Morning at Muffin Granny (above).
■ Cedar statue in Maritime Market (opposite).

7:30 AM

Vendors begin arriving at the Public Market. They take perishable items out of the cold storage locker at the centre of the marketplace and wheel them back to their stalls. They move crates and mobile display cases for produce into the aisleways. Fishmongers place fresh fillets, fish



Courtesy of the CMHC

steaks and whole fish under the glass cases. Butchers do the same with meatier wares.

8:30 AM

Savvy regular customers slip through the half-opened doors of the Public Market for its "soft" opening. Basically, you're free to buy from any vendor open to serve you. Meanwhile, groggy students make their way across the Island to the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Classes start at 9 a.m.

9:00 AM

Doors officially open at the Public Market. The gathered crowd files in. The first of several tour buses disgorges its passengers in front of the Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. yard. At the Granville Island Hotel, operations manager Jill Butterworth reviews the night audit and checks the reservations to see whether guests who want to can stay another night. One by one the housekeeping staff gives each of the hotel's 54 marble-floored rooms the once-over.

Stefan Kagi

10:00 AM

Buskers show up at the festival offices for the daily draw for performing spots. Accredited performers put their numbers in a hat, and are assigned a certain spot at a certain time, for example, Triangle Square at 3 p.m. Once the draw is completed, the busker coordinator posts lists of performers and times at all the designated spots. Meanwhile, over at the Waterpark, kids make a run for the arcing spray as the water is turned on.

David Cooper

■ The Arts Club has nurtured the career of actor, director and playwright Morris Panych. His play *The Ends of the Earth* premiered on Granville Island in 1992.

■ Passenger ferries shuttle commuters around False Creek from dawn to well after dusk.

■ Comedy Festival entertains thousands of public market shoppers every summer during their ten-day festival.

11:00 AM

Several busloads of schoolchildren arrive outside the Waterfront Theatre to take in Carousel Theatre's first matinee of the day. The second, for another group of 240 kids, starts at 1 p.m.

11:30 AM

Shoulders meet as grocery shoppers and the business lunch crowd converge on the Public Market. For the next three hours, this is no place to go to seek peace and quiet. People-watchers, however, enjoy a feast for the eyes.

12:00 NOON

Check-out time at the Granville Island Hotel.

2:00 PM

The second shift of Bonnie Lee Charters departs from the Maritime Market wharves for another five hours of trolling for salmon. At the Granville Island Brewery, brewmaster Mark Simpson filters one of his experimental brews through a sieve called a lauter tun. The fluid, or "orts," drains into a 1,000-litre brew kettle, where it will boil for the next 70 minutes. After that, Simpson transfers the beer to a heat exchanger to cool down, and finally a huge stainless steel vat to ferment for the better part of a week.

Lisa Hartley

2:30 PM

Kitchen staff savour their break outside Bridges Restaurant after the lunch rush. Business will pick up again around 5 p.m. A commissionaire patrols the lot outside with a piece of chalk attached to a stick, marking cars for parking violations. He'll return three

hours later to issue tickets to any marked cars still there. After that, he calls the towing company.

■ A landscaper tends to the flowers (top).
■ High-time: laying out produce from Lee Farms (facing page, bottom).
■ Anglers can embark on five-hour, salmon-fishing charters straight off the Maritime Market docks (bottom).

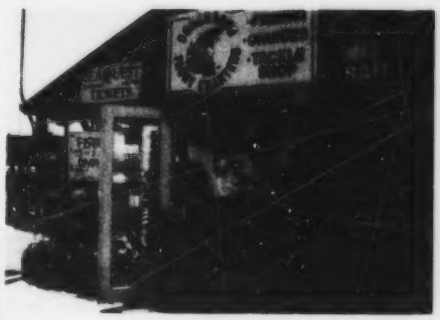
4:00 PM

Daily pandemonium at Arts Umbrella as the kids get out of school and arrive for their afternoon and evening programs. Once the classes start, the noise settles back to a dull roar.

Heather Fisher

5:30 PM

Residents of Sea Village return home from work and a lineup begins to form first outside the pub, then the bistro at Bridges. On warm Friday nights the lineup will snake right around the building and bar patrons spill over the guardrails onto the deck.



Rita Simonar

6:00 PM

A bell sounds to mark the closing of the Public Market. Customers make their last-minute purchases and slowly head for the exits. Within half an hour, the doors are locked. Dragon boat teams, meanwhile, gather and stretch by the dock in Alder Bay for their evening practices. The Waterpark goes silent as the water is shut off. Parents collect their kids, and the puddles slowly drain from the pavement.

7:00 PM

The Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. yard slowly fills with mixer trucks coming in from construction sites at the end of the day. The drivers hose down the insides of the mixers with water collected, filtered and stored on the site. In all but the driest years, Ocean does not rely on the City water works at all but instead on the rainwater that falls on the superbly drained lot itself.

8:00 PM

The lights flicker in the lobbies of the Arts Club and Waterfront theatres for evening performances. The audience goes quiet. There being no curtain to rise, actors walk onto the stage.

9:30 PM

Final sailing of the Aquabus and False Creek Ferries pull into port by the Public Market after taking the last diners home. Showers hum at the False Creek Community Centre as the last weight room patrons of the evening try the patience of the fitness instructor, tarrying a few minutes after closing time.

10:30 PM

The theatre performance now over, the band takes the stage at the Arts Club Lounge. Middle-aged theatregoers sip at their drinks from the tables by the windows while twenty-something singles shoot pool by the bar. They all converge on the crowded dance floor.

11:00 PM

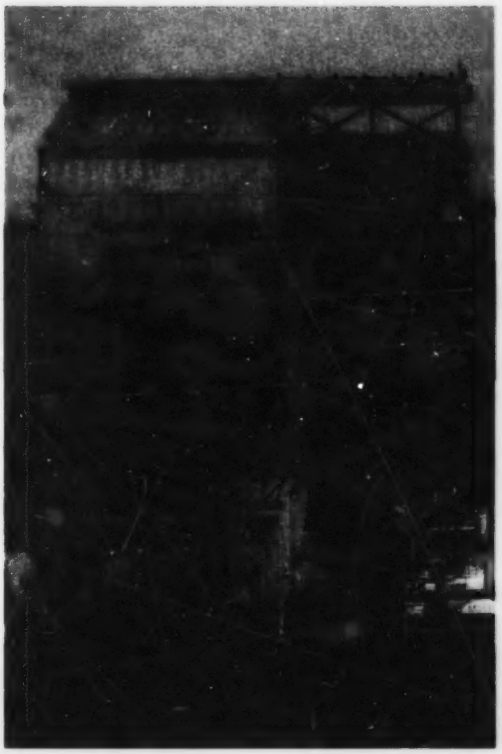
The bellman at the Granville Island Hotel calls it a day and goes home, leaving just the front desk staff.

12:30 AM

Last call at the Bridge's pub and the Arts Club Lounge. The pubs close at 2 a.m. If Performance Works is booked for an evening event, a janitorial crew cleans up, then the commissionaire on the graveyard shift arrives to lock up and rearm the building.

2:30 AM

Security guards make the rounds through the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. The night-owl students, many burrowed deep into a labyrinth of portable dividers and artworks that make up their studios, grudgingly pack up their plaster and airbrushes, shut down their computers and prepare to leave. The building closes at 3 a.m.



Courtesy of the CMHC

Jeno Orban

Bridges Restaurant

Built: 1928
Renovated: 1979
Architect: Richard Henriquez, Henriquez Partners Architects

When Kingston Ganong, the regional head of CMHC and chair of the Trust, arrived on the Island one day in the spring of 1979, he was horrified to look in the direction of the old Arrow Transfer building and see nothing there. "There wasn't a stick standing," he recalls. Asked for an explanation, the Island's general manager, Allan Hammond, simply said there had been an "accident." In fact the builders and engineers employed by the partnership redeveloping the site as Bridges Restaurant found the building structurally unsound, and dismantled it, planning to use its old framing timber to rebuild the restaurant on the same site. Concrete was poured in where the foundation consisted of rotting timbers.

The building was standing again within three days. The result was little different, on the outside at least, from the old Arrow Transfer barn. Even the new metal cladding was painted the same yellow as the trucking company's depot. Entrances were added to the pub at one end and the restaurant and bistro at the other. So were soaring windows facing north towards the Burrard and Granville Bridges from whence the restaurant took its name. That name was emblazened on a sign running the length of the peaked roofline, visible to drivers passing over either thoroughfare. Vancouver is a city traditionally hostile to such garish displays of advertising, but the original building had the sign, so its successor could too.

Michael Mong

Attraction/Repulsion

PART THREE

Wendy W. Bilheimer

Stephan Giles

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

The market realm

CHAPTER 5

David Cooper

SHOPPING

GRANVILLE ISLAND

Two decades ago, *the president of the Downtown Businessmen's Association, Ed Keate, decided to stage a public-relations exercise. Keate placed a handkerchief on one of the railway tracks under the Granville Bridge, near the site of the proposed Granville Island Public Market. A few days later he returned to the scene, with the press in tow, and picked up the hanky, by then filthy with soot and grime. "There will never be a market here," the outspoken critic of the entire Granville Island redevelopment proclaimed. In his mind, it was all a grand public boondoggle.*

The Public Market did in fact open a little over a year later, on July 12, 1979. Its planners projected annual sales per square foot of $200. Anything over that, and they could call the project a success. In its first year, the Public Market recorded sales of $900 a square foot. By the late 1990s, that figure had risen to $1,700.

David Cooper

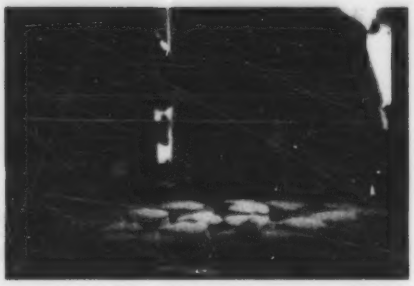
■ A rare snowfall redecorates the Island vista (opposite). ■ Esther O'Malley of Ralph's produce offers up the seasonal bounty (left). ■ The Kids Market (below) strives for "the serendipitous find of the unexpected."

To measure the Island's success in sales figures is misleading at best. The Island and its premier destination contribute to the life of Vancouver in so many ways. Nonetheless, the retail sector is the economic engine that allows everything else on the Island to happen. "The Island would be made or broken on the basis of the success of the Public Market," recalls Phil Boname, a consultant who prepared Granville Island's business plan.

Plans for the Island designated almost the entire area lying west of the Granville Bridge as a "Market Realm." Here would lie the Public Market, a Farmers' Truck Market, a Maritime Market and room for specialty shops. As time went on, a Kids Market was added near the Island's main entrance. Granville Island was meant to draw people as a shopping destination where they would spend more

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

than an hour, perhaps a whole day. Shopping here would not be a matter of ducking in and out of a car. It would be conducted at a leisurely pace on foot, and allow for a degree of consumer serendipity.



Keith Taylor

What you buy would not be something determined before you made the trip. It looks self-evident today, but a lot of careful thought went into making Granville Island a good place to shop. The results speak for themselves.

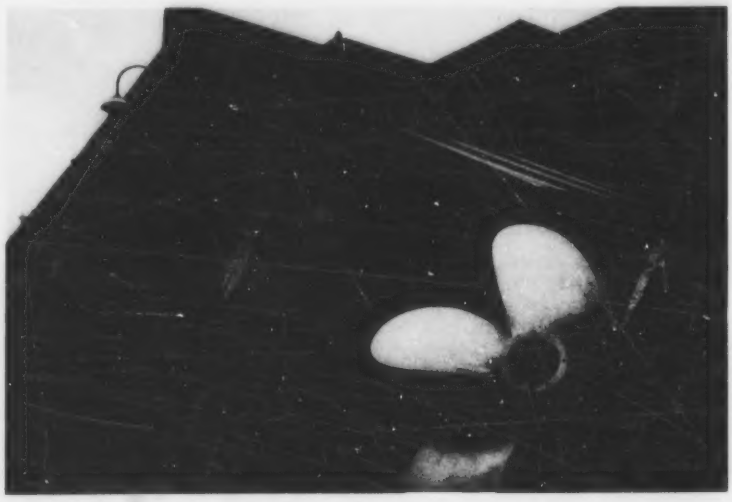
■ **The Maritime Market (below) sells, rents, teaches or tours everything to do with the sea.**

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

The centrepiece of the Island's shopping experience is naturally the Public Market. In the late 1970s when plans for the facility were drawn up, Vancouver had scant history of public food markets of any kind. A market had been running for two years in Gastown, and things there were going badly. Located in a covered, but not enclosed, lot at the foot of Carrall Street (now occupied by Portside Park) the Gastown Public Market could only be reached on foot by crossing the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks. When the trains rolled through or, worse still, shunted back and forth, the market was effectively cut off from its customers. There was no place to park, and transit access was poor. Worst, from the point of view of the vendors keeping stalls there, it was unheated and open to the wind.

These vendors were the first approached by Island manager Allan Hammond and his staff to occupy the new Public Market on Granville Island. Hammond's Granville Island come-on looked like piracy to the promoters of the fast-failing Gastown market, but for those who accepted the invitation, such as Fraser Valley Produce co-owner Judie Glick, they were literally coming in out of the cold. The Island at the time was a good deal less attractive than Gastown, Glick says, but at least it was indoors and heated.

That was just one of the things the Granville Island Public Market did right. The Island's designers and builders examined virtually every major market in North America. By and large, they were poor models. Most had been in place for decades. The only redeveloped ones were Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco and Faneuil Square



Courtesy of the CMHC

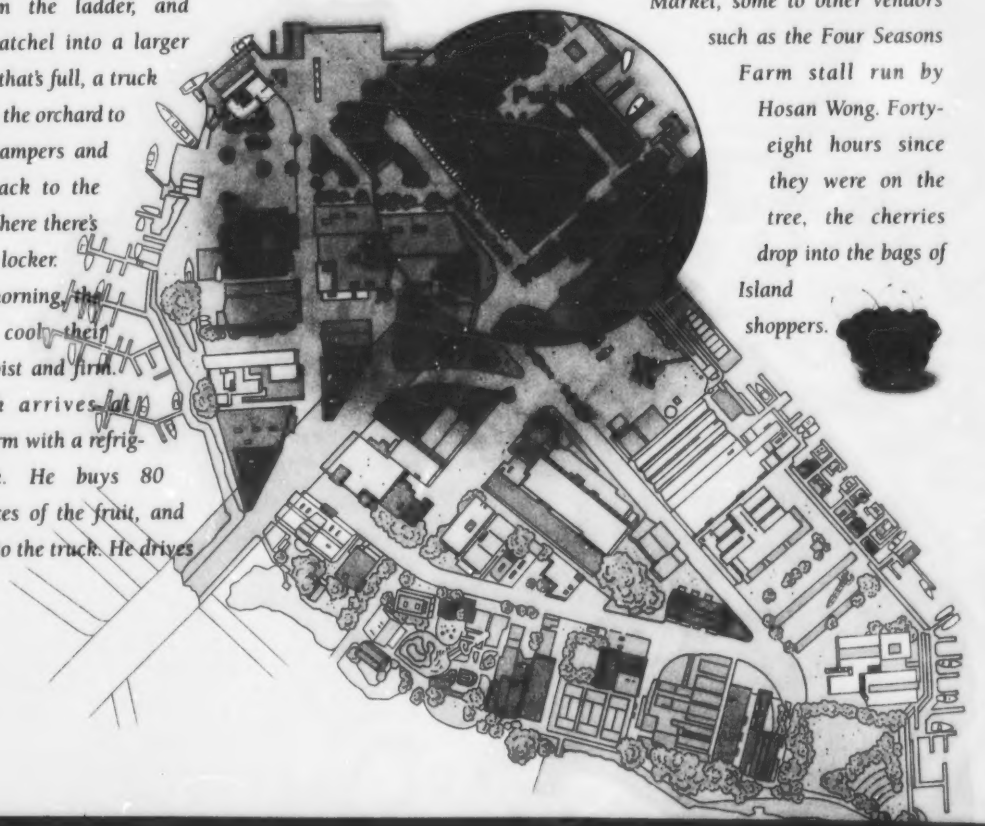
THIS LITTLE CHERRY WENT TO MARKET

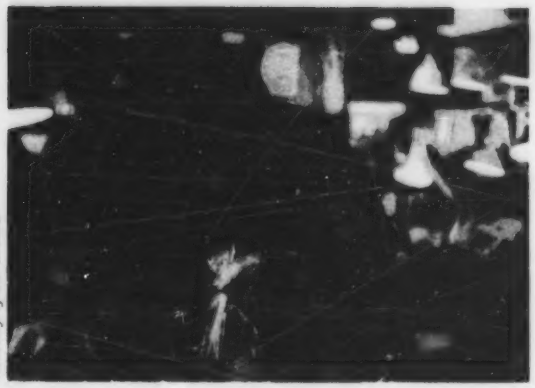
Andrew Klapatiuk

Monday, June 29, 10:14 a.m. The sun beats down on Tom Fernandes' farm in Osoyoos, B.C. Poised on aluminum ladders, satchels under their arms, the pickers have been at it since dawn, harvesting the first cherries of the season. They'll be out another hour or two until the rising mercury sends them heading for shade.

The bulk of the cherry crop won't be ready for another week. That's when the Co-op trucks will arrive to ship the fruit to the big supermarket chains. But on this south-facing slope, at the very tops of the trees, the cherries are ripe now. The picker descends from the ladder, and unloads his satchel into a larger hamper. Once that's full, a truck comes through the orchard to pick up the hampers and drive them back to the farm house, where there's a cold storage locker.

By the next morning, the cherries are cool, their stems still moist and firm. Ralph Merk arrives at Fernandes' farm with a refrigerated truck. He buys 80 20-pound boxes of the fruit, and loads them into the truck. He drives the truck up the desert switchbacks to the Richter Pass, past the curious mineral deposits of Spotted Lake, to the town of Keremeos, nestled in the dry eastern ranges of the North Cascade Mountains. From here the highway follows the Similkameen River upstream, past the cattle and mining country around Princeton, to Manning Park. Here the snow still lingers on the highest peaks. Then down Merk drives, into the Skagit watershed, through tortured mountain valleys, past the Hope Slide, and down into the green and pleasant Fraser Valley at Hope. Just under five hours since leaving Osoyoos, he pulls into his 20-acre farm in Langley. He unloads half his cargo to put into cold storage, then keeps the truck running all night to cool the rest of the cherries. As the commuter traffic disperses around 9:30 on the morning of July 1, he heads into Vancouver, coming to a stop outside the Granville Island Public Market at 10:45. Merk unloads the boxes, some to his own day stand in the middle of the Market, some to other vendors such as the Four Seasons Farm stall run by Hosan Wong. Forty-eight hours since they were on the tree, the cherries drop into the bags of Island shoppers.





Courtesy of the CMHC

in Boston, and they had become boutique havens, with only a smattering of food stalls. Toronto's famed St. Lawrence Market was mostly a wholesale operation. Most of the other examples were farmers' markets, which worked best on a small scale in smaller towns surrounded by farmland. If you wanted to compete for the grocery dollar in a big city, you had to have every kind of food the shopper could possibly want, not just fresh corn in August.

■ Scenes from a market.

The market Granville Island most wanted to emulate lay just a three-hour drive to the south in Seattle. There, the Pike Place Market had been in operation for nearly 80 years, and was itself slated for renovation. One of the things Pike Place demonstrated was how the Public Market had to be open at least six and possibly seven days a week, including Sunday. People would make a day of coming to the market, so the weekend traffic was crucial.

Sunday shopping was rare in British Columbia at the time, and prohibited by Vancouver City bylaws. This was just one of the regulatory hurdles the Island administration had to overcome. Another was the opposition of agricultural marketing boards, which regulate the supply of such items as dairy products, eggs, tree fruits and chicken. The Granville Island concept, whereby farmers and other food producers could sell their produce directly to the consumer, violated marketing board legislation, these associations contended.

City engineers, meanwhile, opposed street parking immediately in front of the Public Market, but Island managers persevered and the street commercial parking went in. They wanted to make sure that even if there were just 10 people in the Market that day, it would look busy from the outside.

THE FIRST FLUSH OF SUCCESS

Customers were waiting outside when the Market opened at 9 a.m. on July 12, 1979.

"It was shoulder to shoulder," is how Johanna Hastings, the Market's first coordinator, remembers that first summer in 1979. "In the evolution of shopping philosophy, its time had come." While grocery stores spent most of the 1950s and '60s consolidating into larger and larger supermarkets to save customers time and money, by the 1970s people wanted to return to a level of personal service and customized cuts.

Wendy Farrow

Of course, a market is only as good as its tenants. There was a genius to the planned tenant mix, and a prudence in sticking to the plan. Hot dog vendors, coffee shops and fast food outlets were lining up to get a toehold in the Public Market even before it opened, but management instead sought a balance of green grocers, butchers, fishmongers, importers, bakers and ethnic food sellers.

Alan Wylie

■ In the evolution of grocery shopping, the Public Market came along at just the right time. Consumers were searching for freshness and selection.

The fast food would be kept separate, at the west end of the buildings, and exclude any chain stores or franchises. There would be tenants on leases in permanent stalls around the walls, and day tables in the middle where farmers could sell their produce in season. In the winter, craft vendors would take their place. As much as possible, vendors would be encouraged to bake or process their goods on-site. A number still do, from Terra Breads to the Stock Market, a soup and sauce emporium.

Market staff were hoping for 42 vendors at the opening, but due to the restrictions on who could set up shop, there were just 21. Even then, they included some unsavoury characters. One early fast-food vendor was discovered in a loading bay in a drunken stupor, with one foot in a pot of food. On another occasion, two vendors with a long-standing feud were placed side-by-side and eventually came to blows in the aisles. Yet another day vendor was chased through the market by a gang brandishing knives. Like the other miscreants, he was never seen in the Public Market again.

It hardly mattered. Once the success of the Public Market was established, more and better-quality tenants emerged. Success bred success. A 1984 survey tallied 60,000 customers or family groups leaving the market with packages in a single week. Today the Market's management estimates the Public Market plays host to as many as a quarter-million shoppers a month. The number of vendors in the market has grown to 49, on top of which there is space for 47 day vendors. Outside the Arts Club Theatre, there is also a less formal Farmers' Truck Market. Here, on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the summer and fall, fruit and vegetable growers sell produce fresh from their farms.

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

Mauro Duso visited the Public Market the second weekend after it opened, and became entranced. Unable to work at his usual summer job packing fish due to an injury, he decided then and there to open a coffee shop in the Market. His application, however, was turned down; there was already one coffee shop in the Market. Undeterred, he decided to sell something else he understood, Italian specialty foods. Out of this 350-square-foot stall, Duso's has

Wendy Farrow

grown to encompass a second outlet at the Lonsdale Quay market in North Vancouver and a pasta factory in Burnaby. But while similar shops outgrew the Granville Island Public Market and moved on, Duso chose to stay.

"This place has electricity," he explains. "The vendors down here, we all feed on each other." Duso feels he has seen the city grow and mature in good times and bad. He has seen public tastes go from white bread to levain. He has known customers who moved away and came back. He has seen customers meet at the Market, start dating, get married and come back with their kids. It all starts, he laughs, with, "Gee, that's an interesting star fruit you have there."

Hung from a paper clamp behind the till at South China Seas Trading Co., Katherine Leong has a handful of pink message slips, notes written on the backs of receipts and lists of ingredients. Many are from the head chefs at fine restaurants. Leong figures she knows 80 per cent of the chefs in the city. They rely on Leong to source some of the world's most exotic ingredients. Right now, she's looking for a blue fungus that grows on corn, known in Mexico as cuittiacoche. She has none in stock among the hundreds of unusual fruits, spices, mushrooms and so on that line the shelves here.

Other items come only in season: wild fiddleheads, hijiki (seaweed) and matsutake (pine mushrooms) from B.C., truffles from Oregon; from Thailand, mangoes in April, rambutan in May and durian in June; young ginger from Hawaii in June, and from Fiji in July. After 11 years, Leong has become Vancouver's guru of exotic cooking, and like most of the owner-operators in the Public Market, she loves sharing her storehouse of knowledge with customers.

Kathryn Hatashita-Lee

Sundays were especially popular in the early years, because the area's supermarkets then were all closed. Many of the shoppers were European-born or young people who liked to shop for food on a daily basis. These customers placed a premium on freshness, and they liked the atmosphere. Dino Kourtessis, the owner of Dino's Greek deli, was known to shout and hail customers. Over the years the city and the customers changed and grew up. The summer of Expo

THE ISLAND SHOPPER

We sent fashion stylist and super-shopper Catherine Dunwoody on a quest, nay, a spree, to find some of Granville Island's unique and wonderful items for sale. This is what she came back with.

■ Alison Feargrieve Teapot **Gallery of B.C. Ceramics** ■ Children's moccasins made of suede and rabbit fur trim, with beaded toes **Wickaninnish Gallery** ■ Pauline Dupas Jewellery rings (green tourmaline, amethyst, hessonite garnet) **Circle Craft** ■ Hand-woven red wool and mohair fibre blanket **Fibre Art Studio** ■ Hand-blown glass perfume bottles **Molnar Glass Studio** ■ Rubber stamps. Recycled rubberized paper covered notebooks with blank pages inside (black and natural) **Paper Ya** ■ Snorkel and mask **Rowands Reef** ■ Straw rimmed hat trimmed in purple velvet, yellow & rust organza, red flowers and purple and yellow feathers **Edie's Hats** ■ Lighten Up! candles with metallic coloured shells **The Walrus & The Carpenter** ■ CRES, orca whale puppet, humpback whale puppet, baby orca puppet **Kites & Puppets** ■ Temperamental fairies (Blonde, Red and Brown) **MESA** ■ Inukshuk Stone Sentinel (using assembled and sandcarved recycled glass, this contemporary interpretation of the ancient Inukshuk was designed by Eric Allen Montgomery) **Craft House** ■ Gardening fork and spade **Dig This**

All photographs in the island shopper: Clinton Hussey

86 was a particularly busy time, and marked the beginning of a tourism boom that embraced Granville Island, especially in the summer. Before that, you'd never see air-conditioned buses parked outside the Public Market. But the friendly atmosphere among the many small merchants is still there, Judie Glick asserts. It's not a bitter, competitive environment like the world outside. "On a good day, everybody has a good day together," she says.

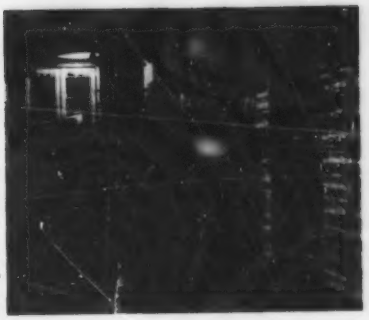
In her 20 years at the Public Market, coordinator Johanna Hastings has seen businesses outgrow the market and move on. She's seen day vendors graduate to permanent lessees. She's seen people like Luc Bergeron, who began selling maple syrup from his farm in the Beauce region of Quebec, use his toehold on Granville Island as a springboard into markets as far away as Japan. An immigrant woman uses the proceeds of her seasonal berry stall to fight for feminist causes in India every winter. The Okanagan Wine Shop set a precedent by becoming the first privately-owned store to sell wine in British Columbia. Change and turnover is necessary in a retail environment such as this, Hastings says, and there's no room for nostalgia. "The Vancouver shopper is tremendously better informed today than in 1979. He or she knows a half-dozen different kinds of black cherry and asks for them by name," she marvels. "We've helped create that."

STRIVING FOR THE UNIQUE

Outside the Public Market, the line separating retail from other uses gets blurred. There are the straight specialty shops, such as Ruddick's Fly Shop in the Maritime Market, easily the best-known fly-fishing establishment in B.C. But even there, co-owner Cathy Ruddick is known for her fly-casting lessons. The Ecomarine Ocean Kayak Centre not only sells kayaks and accessories, but organizes guided trips around the B.C. coast and beyond, and has a paddling school. The various boat brokers along the Maritime Market's shore look out on a marina as if it's one big used car lot, and in a way it is – only selling vehicles for water travel rather than road.

■ A scene from the Public Market: Mauro Duso's shop: "There's an electricity down here."

Wendy Farrow

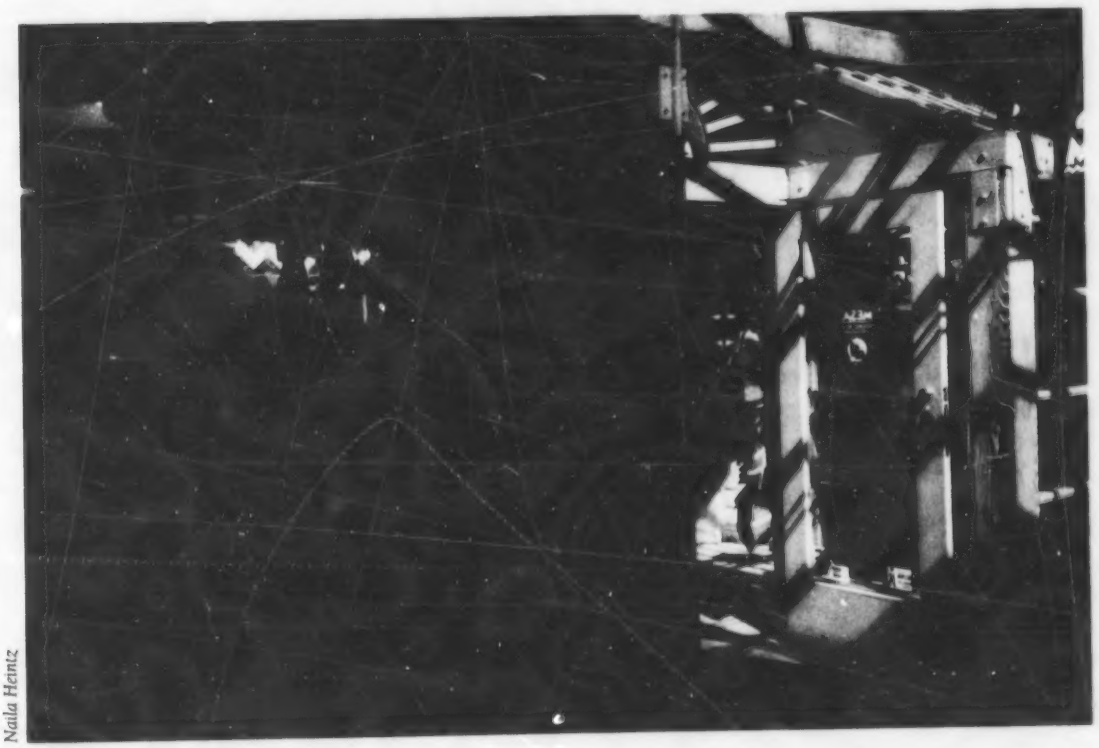


Phillip Martin Morize

In the Net Loft and buildings scattered across the Island are craft, import and specialty retailers that help make the shopping experience at Granville Island one of a kind. From hard-to-find plant and garden supplies at Dig This to hand-made writing and art papers at Paper-Ya, the boutiques of Granville Island have become a natural place to find that special something for a special someone.

Many of these retailers make their products on-site. Klaus Sebok, a German-born designer of fashion eyeglass frames, moved his shop here from Robson Street in the late 1980s to get his products in front of an international clientele. Sure enough, his first customer was none other than the actor and comedian Robin Williams, in Vancouver to shoot a film. Williams has since ordered numerous custom frames from Sebok's Granville Eyeland. The store has also sold frames to recording artist Elton John. Frames are made out of everything from turtle shell to buffalo horn to wood. Sebok hopes to open a larger production site off the Island, but he himself will continue to design and sell frames at the tiny store. That's the best way to stay in touch with your customers, he says.

Nancy Lord, a designer of women's fashions, has cultivated an international clientele out of her shop over the past seven years. Foreign visitors buy their first dress or suit at Lord's boutique in the Net Loft, and order again and again by mail and the Internet. Few customers realize it,



Naila Heintz

but the clothes are made upstairs in a 20,000-square-foot shop with 20 employees.

Wendy W. Bilheimer

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

BORN TO SHOP

The Kids Market is everything a big-box toy store isn't. The toys, games, books, recordings, clothes and other gifts for children aged two to 18 typically won't bear the logo of a multinational manufacturer. They'll instead be the work of local craftspeople or hard-to-find specialty imports. If you're looking for a gift for the kid who has everything, this is the place.

When this former paint factory proved too great a challenge for the groups aiming to build the Waterfront Theatre, developer David Cox stepped into the breach with a plan to rebuild the site as a complex for children's retailers. Approximately 25 tenants here sell items such as wooden toys, children's art supplies, kites and streamers and hand-made girls' dresses.

"All the merchants here are looking to stock the unique and different," says co-manager Denise Ellis. Like the Public Market, the Kids Market is about the experience of shopping as much as the shopping itself. On holidays and other designated days, there is usually entertainment of some kind. At the same time as Wimbledon in June, Tennis Canada puts on its own kids' tournament using oversized racquets and foam balls. Through the summer, there are sidewalk chalk art shows, yo-yo contests, stomp rockets and mini-golf. In the Christmas season, Kids Market brings in a Santa Claus like none you've seen at any other shopping mall. The jolly old elf tells stories and performs magic tricks instead of simply posing for the camera. Other performances are unscheduled. Disney might be promoting characters in a new animated movie on-site or a musical group might drop in while the members are in town to perform elsewhere. Ellis calls it, "the serendipitous find of the unexpected. People can always expect that something's going on down here."

David Cooper

■ The Net Loft including Granville Eyeland and Mesa (opposite). Many of the specialty items sold here are made on-site. ■ The Kids Market has things to do other than shop (top).

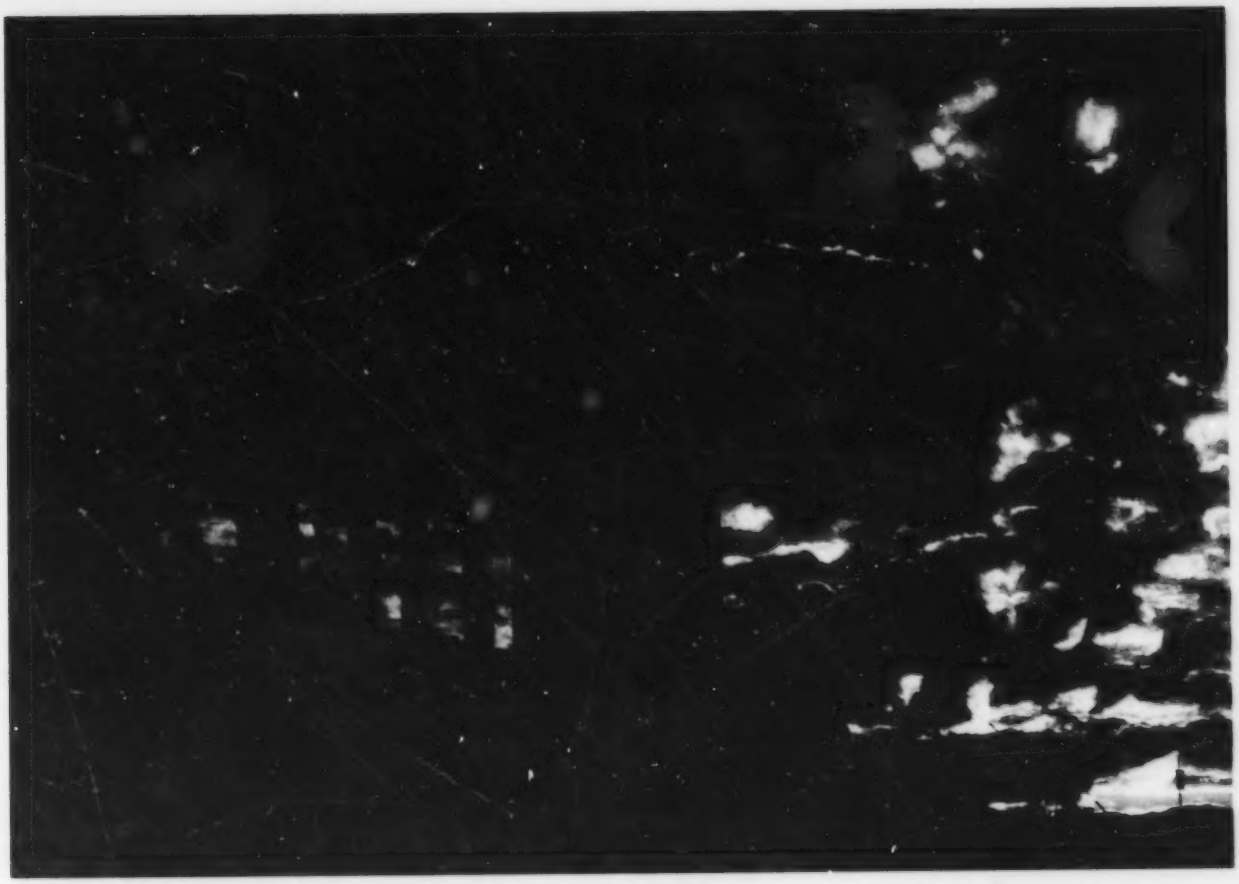
Dress down, eat up

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

CHAPTER 6

ISLAND DINING AND NIGHTLIFE

The world's largest backgammon game *took place on a summer day in 1975 on the parking lot of the Creekhouse on Granville Island. The dice were a metre across; the chips were people. Television anchorman Tony Parsons was the master of ceremonies, and none other than Peter Brown, Vancouver's most storied stock broker, won the final in front of hundreds of onlookers.*



J. Wayne Kaulback, Skylight Images

■ Sunset on the island (above): still the best deck in the city. ■ Sailboats moored outside The Creek (opposite).

It was an appropriate vehicle to promote the newly opened Mulvaney's Restaurant. Restaurateur Bud Kanke had bought the place, formerly known as the Creekhouse Restaurant, for a pittance. The previous owners simply couldn't make a go of it in what was then an inaccessible industrial slum. The only other restaurant on the Island was the second outlet in the Keg and Cleaver steakhouse chain, which was pioneering the concept of "casual dining" in western Canada to considerable success. The same could not be said for the Creekhouse's attempts at grilled pig on a spit.

With its tropical ambience (one of the early creations of restaurant designer David Vance) and disco dancing, Mulvaney's became one of Vancouver's premier night-spots through the late 1970s, and the redevelopment of Granville Island only increased its popularity. In 1979, however, it gained a competitor on the Island.

THE BEST SEAT IN TOWN

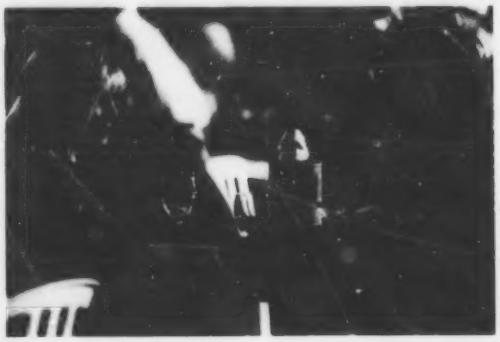
Two years earlier, a professor of urban planning at the University of British Columbia, Michael Seelig, took an interest in the goings-on at Granville Island and wanted to be a part of it. He managed to talk a friend, mathematics prof Nathan Divinsky, into helping apply for a licence to open a small, informal pub on the Island. Divinsky was a chess and bridge master and a pianist, and he too liked the idea of a neighbourhood watering

Rita Simonar

hole – a place unlike the predominant hotel bars and noisy bars that then represented Vancouver's club scene. Both Divinsky and Seelig loved the vernacular architecture of Granville Island. It conjured a rugged rather than a sophisticated atmosphere, something that Vancouver, in their minds, was all about. Neither man had any business experience outside of consulting, however, so Divinsky invited his friend Abe Sacks, the president of Tree Island Steel, to join them in the venture.

Seelig was on sabbatical in Washington, D.C., when he got a call from Sacks to say that the Granville Island administration was taking proposal calls on the Arrow Transfer building. It had possibly the best location on Granville Island, on the western tip, with water all around and a panoramic view of the surrounding bridges. It was a large building, however, and redevelopment guidelines dictated that it be kept so. The 125-seat pub (then the maximum allowed under provincial liquor laws) they envisioned would never fill Arrow Transfer's 11,000 square feet. Seelig flew back to Vancouver to check it out. He was met at the airport by Sacks and Richard Henriquez, an architect they both knew. Sure enough, the site had potential, and

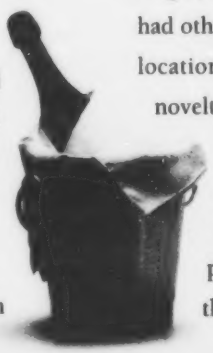
because it had no residential neighbours, they wouldn't have to go through the complicated referendum process to open a pub there. A subsequent feasibility study confirmed that it would take more than a pub to turn a profit on the site, however. The report suggested a pub, a bistro and a full-service restaurant. The partners by this time were too deeply invested in the project to turn back, so they put together a proposal and were chosen from among more than 30 applicants.



Andrew Klapatiuk

The building had to be completely dismantled and reassembled using the original timber beams from Arrow Transfer. The exterior was painted yellow like the old moving company, and the sign on the roof was repainted with the restaurant's name: Bridges. But the really innovative design went on on the inside.

There, designer David Vance and general manager George Frankel, Seelig's brother-in-law, combined to create the kind of establishment Vancouver had never seen before. In a City where conservative whites, browns and blues prevailed, the upholstery was salmon-coloured. The walls were covered in tiles made in Marseilles and salvaged from the old Pier B-C (now Canada Place) on Burrard Inlet. The bistro had the City's first wine bar and the restaurant upstairs a distinctly New York feel. Before it was fully open, Bridges was the toast of interior design magazines.



The pub in fact opened late in 1980, a few days before the kitchen received a permit from the City health department. As a result, the staff had to buy sandwiches at the Public Market nearby to serve with the drinks. At first they gave the food away, and two elderly ladies came in for coffees just so they could get the food. Once the kitchen opened and the bar began charging, they left, affronted.

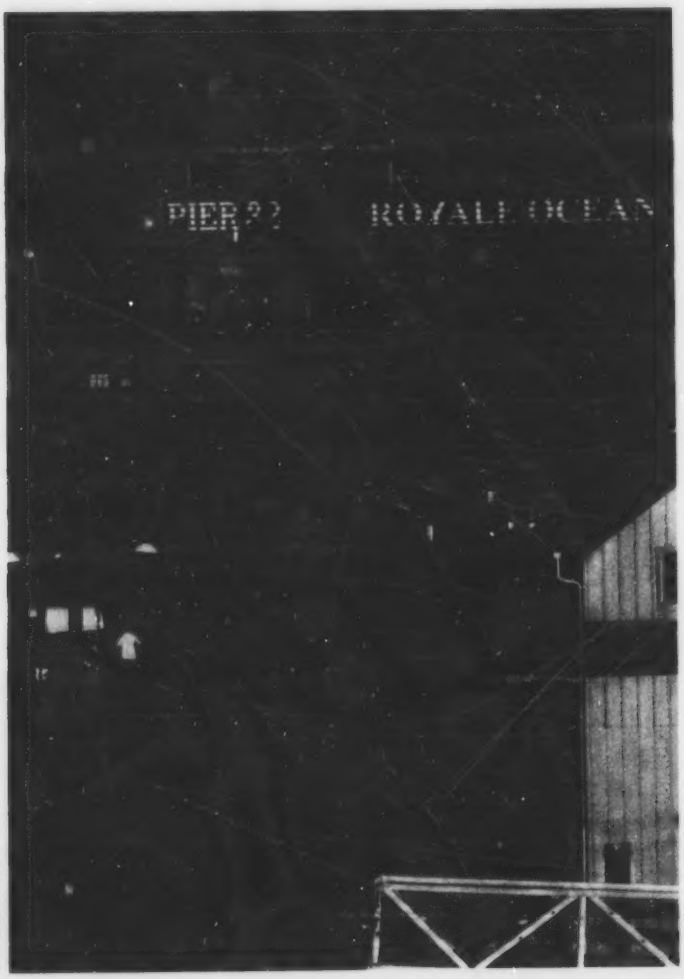
The bistro and restaurant opened in the months to follow. It soon became clear, however, that the restaurant design – and the market – demanded something more upscale than the hangout for art school students and intellectuals Seelig and Divinsky had first conceived. Fortunately, Bridges had an inventive – Seelig uses the term 'crazy' – head chef at the time, Mark Wolf, who was more than up to the task. He came up with menus free of starch that didn't fit neatly into any one category of cuisine. He taught his charges to focus on the food's presentation.

Suddenly it was Bridges, not Mulvaney's, that had the crowds lining up to get in. In its first year of operation Bridges won *Vancouver Magazine*'s Restaurant of the Year award. It had other things going for it too: a knockout location, size and volume, plus the very novelty of going down to Granville Island.

"In the first couple of years it was not run like a business; it was run like a party," Seelig reflects. "Our profits should have been double what they were."

■ **The founders of Bridges Restaurant (opposite) wanted to open a neighbourhood pub. Instead, they unleashed a dining phenomenon.**

On New Year's Eve in 1981, when the Vancouver housing market was at its peak, one table of real estate agents bought champagne for the entire house. The next year, the market would collapse, but Bridges remained for years the place to be seen in Vancouver. All the beautiful people flocked there.



Kim Stallknecht

Unfortunately, so too came unsavoury high-life artists who would shoot cocaine in the bathrooms. Fortunately, in retrospect, these wild years were not to last. The nouveau riche and their less savoury brethren found new places to play. "What saved us was when Pelican Bay opened in 1983," Seelig says.

MEANWHILE, AT THE OTHER END OF THE ISLAND

The Pelican Bay was a glitzy bar at the opposite end of the Island, in the Granville Island Hotel. It was owned by an unwieldy syndicate of 67 local business people who, the legend goes, drank their dividends at the bar. Certainly the Pelican Bay became emblematic of the "Go-go '80s" in Vancouver, a meet market for thirty-something masters and mistresses of the universe. Cynics dubbed it the Bay of Pigs.

The Pelican Bay's heyday passed with the Stock Market crash of 1987. No Vancouver eatery has inspired the same kind of fervour since. As Michael Seelig notes, "That kind of hype doesn't exist any more." While they never made the spiash of Mulvaney's (which Kanke sold to new managers in 1987) or Bridges, other eateries sprang up on the Island through the 1980s, each to serve its own niche. Isadora's was a cooperative dedicated to serving whole foods and using the proceeds to support social causes.

More tied to the local community than other restaurants, Isadora's was part restaurant, part art gallery, part community centre. Every fall, it hosted a pumpkin-carving competition judged by the likes of famed Haida carver Robert Davidson. Unfortunately, the best of intentions could not keep the financial wolves from Isadora's

door; the restaurant closed in 1998.

Leslie Scragg

The Arts Club Lounge, with its pub atmosphere inside and waterfront patio outside, grew to become an after-work stalwart and place to see live music. The 1990s saw the demise of Jonathan's restaurant at Pier 32, now occupied by the Kamei Royale Ocean Japanese restaurant, and the arrival of the Only Other Seafood Cafe. Others such as the Keg and Bridges continue to serve their loyal customers as profitably as ever.

Michael Seelig puts the flowering of Vancouver's restaurant scene, and the Island's role in it, into perspective. When he arrived in Vancouver from Israel in 1971, the only way he could obtain pita bread was to bake his own. Now you can buy pita bread in the corner grocery. There are fine restaurants to be found in almost every neighbourhood, and people don't have to go to Granville Island to find something exotic. "When the White Spot began sporting pink tablecloths, we knew it was time to go back to white," Seelig jokes. The pub and bistro still serve a mostly local clientele, though the restaurant these days primarily caters to the tourist trade. And while the decor may change every few years, Bridges still has the most popular outdoor deck in the city, with its unbeatable view and the way it catches the sun.

But the future of dining on the Island can best be seen on the old site of the Pelican Bay, now a brew pub and restaurant known as The Creek. There, executive chef Robert Sulatycky, who has represented Canada at the prestigious Bocuse d'Or culinary competition in Lyons, France, is once again trying to introduce something new to Vancouver diners. Sulatycky has designed a restaurant where fine food is matched to the beers brewed on the premises. Unlike the Century Grill in Yaletown, which he also oversees, the price point must reflect the location and attract a clientele from the False Creek-Fairview Slopes neighbourhood.

From his travels down the U.S. West Coast, Sulatycky has concluded that the traditional fine dining experience is dead. Customers still demand fine food and great service, only now in a fun, casual atmosphere. To make that work as a business, you need an open floor plan and a large, well-managed kitchen. In short, the future lies in downtown quality with a neighbourhood ambience. That, ironically, is something Granville Island's eateries have endeavoured to offer since the early days of the Keg and Mulvaney's. To foresee the future, you have only to look at the recent past.

Marion De Gier

■ The many flavours of Granville Island: Kamei Royale Ocean (left); boardwalk outside the Sirloiner (above). Dining anywhere on Granville Island involves great food in a spectacular setting.

Higher impulses

C. Randle, courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

CHAPTER 7

ARTS, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

"There's a laugher right in the back. *Thank God for the laughter," Bernard Cuffling says, dabbing at his makeup with a handkerchief. It's a Friday night, the third week into a production of the Broadway musical revue* Side by Side by Sondheim *at the Arts Club Mainstage. The backstage area, in this case, happens to be the Arts Club's front office, the actors sitting on empty desks waiting for the second act to begin. The voice of Jane Mortifee trills down the hall from the women's dressing room.*

David Cooper, courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

Cuffling is an Arts Club veteran, having played in some 50 productions dating back to the organization's days in a historic but tiny theatre on Seymour Street in the early 1970s. Those days might find the actors, stage manager or even artistic director Bill Millerd manning the box office before the curtain went up. Today, despite the desks, it's a larger, more sophisticated machine. Wearing a headset, backstage coordinator Caryn Fehr gets the cue from stage manager Louis Marie Bournival, ensconced in the sound and lighting booth at the back of the theatre. The audience is slowly taking its seats. Fehr ascends a precipitous metal ladder to a fly space above stage right, where she'll have to rustle up some thunder and lightning; the actors gather in the wings; the pianists take their places on the stage, and the second act begins with Ruth Nichol's spare rendition of "Send in the Clowns."

A TALE OF TWO THEATRES

From the outset, the redeveloped Granville Island was meant to be a haven for the arts. As much as building a Public Market, however, creating an artistic precinct was a risky venture, with no shortage of detractors. In the mid-1970s, Toronto's Harbourfront development had just opened and was, in the early going, perceived as a flop. It was isolated from the city, critics charged, and amounted to a big, public boondoggle. Harbourfront would go on to have a dramatic impact on Toronto's arts scene, but in the meantime, Granville Island drew some lessons from its experience.

■ Director Morris Panych brought Moliere's The Imaginary Invalid to the Arts Club's mainstage.
■ A busker charms onlookers at the Vancouver International Comedy Festival.

David Cooper

Instead of inventing a new artistic space

from scratch as Harbourfront did, the Island's planners sought to provide a home for existing arts groups in Vancouver. The centrepiece of the Island's arts scene would be a theatre; studios for visual artists and artisans would provide the infill.

Local theatrical producer Chris Wootten was handed the task of soliciting and reviewing applications from arts groups. Among those seeking to build a theatre, three proposals stood out. The first came from The Playhouse, by far the largest theatre company in British Columbia and the leading recipient of grants from the Canada Council and other agencies. The Playhouse planned to relocate from the Vancouver civic theatres complex downtown to the Westex Manufacturing building on Granville Island, turning the place into a 60,000-square-foot complex featuring 700- and 300-seat theatres, wardrobe and set construction shops.

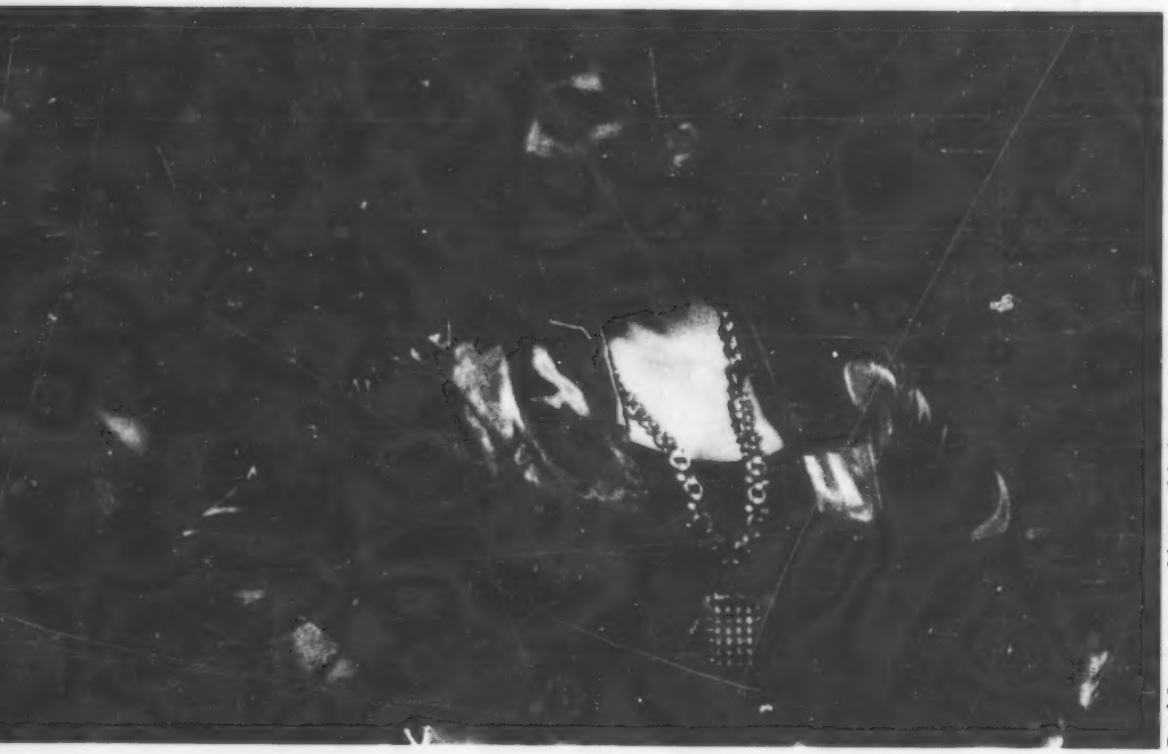
The second application came from the Arts Club, a populist alternative to The Playhouse. The Arts Club was small by comparison, running out of a 230-seat theatre on Seymour Street, but it had a solid track record and a balance sheet in the black, something of a rarity in the theatre, then as now.

The third proposal came from a consortium of the New Play Centre, West Coast Actors and Carousel Theatre. Together they called themselves the Theatre Space Project. Both the Arts Club and Theatre Space proposed to build their theatre in the old Canada Chain & Forge building next to the Public Market. The Arts Club had designs on a building across the lane as well, for a smaller revue theatre with tables.

Clearly Granville Island could not accommodate them all, and another conflict entered

the picture with the Vancouver School of Art. The plans for the Island also called for an educational component, preferably a major post-secondary institution to help generate traffic of a different sort to the Public Market's. The Vancouver School of Art had already decided to move, but its first choice was not Granville Island but instead the Justice Institute lands in West Point Grey near the University of British Columbia. Its second choice was the Westex Manufacturing building on the Island, for which The Playhouse had already spoken.

"It was a very difficult choice," says Wootten, who would go on to become creative director of The Playhouse. Its proposal would have shifted the Vancouver theatre community's centre of gravity to the Island and away from downtown. There was a feeling at the Granville Island Trust,



David Cooper, courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

however, that the Playhouse was too stuffy and formal for the Island, and that the Arts Club would make a better fit. More importantly, the chance to bag the art school was too good to pass up. On Wooten and Brink's recommendations, the Trust opted to approve the Arts Club's and the Vancouver School of Art's proposals, and to reject The Playhouse's. Further, it invited Theatre Space Project to submit a new proposal on any other vacant building – the Island was still full of them in 1978 – to build a second theatre complex. With The Playhouse out of the picture, Wootten and others felt there was room for a second small theatre on the Island. Theatre Space first chose the Plastex Manufacturing plant (now Kids Market), and when that proved too costly to renovate, the smaller building next door. It would become the Waterfront Theatre. In 1982, the Arts Club opened its revue theatre adjacent to its main stage and the Island's live theatre component was complete.

Courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

Twenty years later, Wootten feels they made the right choice. Granville Island remains a casual place to see live theatre, easily accessible to the city's West Side (from whence most of the theatre audience comes). It has indubitably become the centre of the City's visual arts scene, due to the presence of the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design). In retrospect, he says, "Two small

■ Ruth Nichol and Karin Knoval perform Three Penny Opera at the Arts Club Theatre, 1997(above). ■ Denis Simpson and Lovena Fox strut their stuff in the 1985 production of Ain't Misbehavin' (left).

EMILY CARR INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN (NEW WING)

In 1991, John Patkau had quite a challenge in front of him: to design the largest structure built on Granville Island since the 1920s, to satisfy the lofty esthetics of an art school, and to combine it with something as mundane as a parking garage. Moreover, the new structure had to look like it belonged among the factories and machine shops of the 1920s. Instead of building an academic ivory tower, he endeavoured to integrate the Institute with the street. The broad staircase at the main entrance invites pedestrians up past what Patkau calls "the big, dumb core" of the building, a 70,000-square-foot parking garage, to the brainy areas around the periphery.

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DRAMATIC CHANGES

The audience just thought it was part of the show, the premiere of Ann Mortifee's musical Reflections on Crooked Walking. Mortifee and Simon Webb were engaged in an intergalactic duel on the Arts Club's Mainstage one night in December, 1982, when hundreds of gallons of water poured down from the rafters. A flashpot, part of the show's pyrotechnics, had set off smoke detectors; they triggered a "deluge curtain" – something the Vancouver Fire Department had insisted on during the conversion from factory to theatre – to overturn its trough of water. Spectators were taken aback when stage workers stopped the show to mop up. The show did go on, one night later.

The disasters and triumphs of the Arts Club read like a history of the theatre in Vancouver. Since the curtain went up on *The Incredible Murder of Cardinal Tosca* in 1979, the company's two Granville Island theatres have seen close to 300 productions come and go. Titles such as *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *It's Snowing on Saltspring*, *Angry Housewives*, *Wild Guys* and *Red Rock Diner* have become etched in the memories of Vancouver theatregoers. Actors such as Jeff Hyslop, Brent Carver, Winston Reckert, Leon Bibb, Bruce Greenwood, Ruth Nicol and Nicola Cavendish have all graced the Mainstage and Revue theatres, some many times over. The career of acclaimed actor, playwright and director Morris Panych has been largely nurtured within these walls. The premiere of his play *The Ends of the Earth* on the Mainstage in 1992 earned Panych the Governor-General's Award for the best new English-language play in Canada.

In 20 years, the Arts Club's president, Bill Millerd, has seen theatre in Vancouver grow and change and mature. In the early 1980s, Granville Island was keeping what there was of a theatre community alive, he says. Then Expo 86 brought Vancouver's performing arts scene to a higher level. Since then Vancouver has seen a huge proliferation of entertainment options, and the burgeoning film and television production industry has helped keep many fine young performers in the City. Through it all, the Mainstage continues to host eight performances a week. After years running cabaret-style shows, the Revue stage has been turned over to improvisational comedy from the Vancouver Theatresports League four nights a week. Between its theatres, its productions and its production shop (located a few blocks away on Cartwright Street), the Arts Club keeps 25 full-time and 100 seasonal or part-time employees busy. It remains an integral part of the dramatic life of Vancouver.

Stefan Kagt

■ Driven out of other locations, buskers found a refuge on the Island (right).

Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design (new wing)

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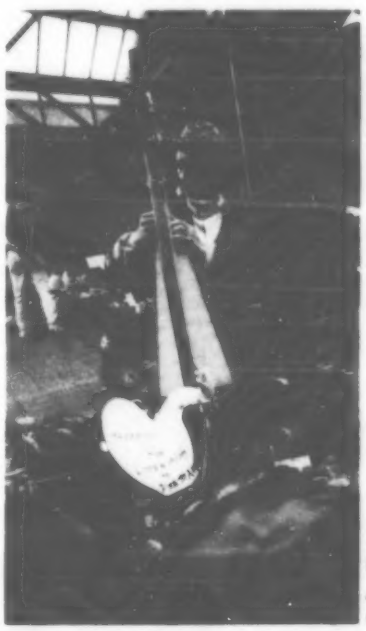
The disasters and triumphs of the Arts Club read like a history of the theatre in Vancouver. Since the curtain went up on *The Incredible Murder of Cardinal Tosca* in 1979, the company's two Granville Island theatres have seen close to 300 productions come and go. Titles such as *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *It's Snowing on Saltspring*, *Angry Housewives*, *Wild Guys* and *Red Rock Diner* have become etched in the memories of Vancouver theatregoers. Actors such as Jeff Hyslop, Brent Carver, Winston Reckert, Leon Bibb, Bruce Greenwood, Ruth Nicol and Nicola Cavendish have all graced the Mainstage and Revue theatres, some many times over. The career of acclaimed actor, playwright and director Morris Panych has been largely nurtured within these walls. The premiere of his play *The Ends of the Earth* on the Mainstage in 1992 earned Panych the Governor-General's Award for the best new English-language play in Canada.

In 20 years, the Arts Club's president, Bill Millerd, has seen theatre in Vancouver grow and change and mature. In the early 1980s, Granville Island was keeping what there was of a theatre community alive, he says. Then Expo 86 brought Vancouver's performing arts scene to a higher level. Since then Vancouver has seen a huge proliferation of entertainment options, and the burgeoning film and television production industry has helped keep many fine young performers in the City. Through it all, the Mainstage continues to host eight performances a week. After years running cabaret-style shows, the Revue stage has been turned over to improvisational comedy from the Vancouver Theatresports League four nights a week. Between its theatres, its productions and its production shop (located a few blocks away on Cartwright Street), the Arts Club keeps 25 full-time and 100 seasonal or part-time employees busy. It remains an integral part of the dramatic life of Vancouver.



Stefan Kagt

■ Driven out of other locations, buskers found a refuge on the Island (right).

ON THE WATERFRONT

Elizabeth Ball remembers setting up shop in the "Greenhouse," a small shed once occupied by Columbia Bitulithic and now home to a craft shop. Then, as now, Ball was the artistic director of Carousel Theatre, a company dedicated to running a theatre school and producing shows for children, families and students. Carousel held classes on the main floor, while the Arts Club and designer Douglas Welch shared an office upstairs. To get there, one had to wade through a "sea of mud," as Ball puts it. Wellington boots were part of the uniform most months of the year.

Ralph Bower, Courtesy of Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design

Jeno Orban, courtesy of Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design

A change in the federal government in 1979 had disrupted funding for non-profit arts groups such as the Theatre Space Project, of which Carousel was a part. As a result, Theatre Space had to scale back its plans to build two theatres in the Plastex Building. Ball invited her father, Walter, a structural engineer, to tour the Island looking for other sites that might be cheaper to renovate. The one he picked lay right next door to the Plastex (which was subsequently redeveloped as the Kids Market). It was filled with disused metal cranes and dripping with machine oil, but it was structurally sound. With just $125,000 – mostly from private donors and the Granville Island administration – Theatre Space turned it into the Waterfront Theatre. Later grants allowed the group, which time winnowed down to Carousel alone, to expand the lobby area, add dressing rooms upstairs and to replace the former factory's overhead propane heaters with a proper air conditioning system. (Prior to that, audiences were sometimes treated to a sudden fiery flare-up during the quietest scene in the play.) Plans are underway to rename the theatre for Mavor Moore, the local composer and playwright who set

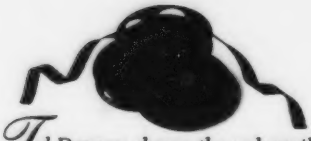
AN ART SCHOOL BY ANY OTHER NAME

Built: 1994
Architect: John Patkau, Patkau Architects

With its move to Granville Island, the Vancouver School of Art became the Emily Carr College of Art. Emily Carr was B.C.'s most important artist. She was an outspoken woman in a time when women were taught not to be. She was a writer as well as a painter, and melded the traditions of European impressionism with Northwest Coast aboriginal themes. In short, she embodied everything that British Columbia's premier art school should. Twenty years and two minor name changes later - adding the word 'Design' and finally changing 'College' to 'Institute' to reflect the school's degree-granting status - the controversy seems, well, academic. Both the artist and the school are recognized across Canada and, increasingly, around the world. Graduates are proud to say they were students at, and of, Emily Carr.

ECIAD then and now: the art school beat out The Playhouse for the Westex building (left, above)

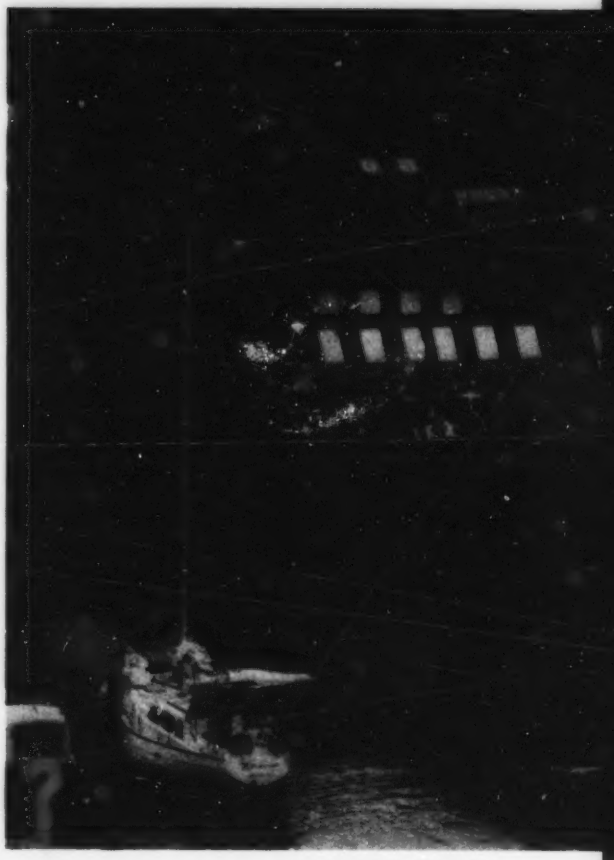
GRANVILLE ISL



Ted Danson chases the unhappily married Isabella Rossellini through stalls piled high with fruits and vegetables, brandishing a salmon. You just know love is going to bloom. A morose Richard Gere gets the hard facts of life from his teenaged daughter over lunch in the Blue Parrot Espresso Bar, with its magnificent view of water and mountains. Vinnie Terranova, TV's quintessential Wiseguy undercover agent, kicks butt in a black leather jacket and army boots down by the waterfront.

Where are we? Hollywood? No, this is Granville Island. When Vancouver metamorphosed into Hollywood North, Granville Island, a treasure island of diversity, became one of the hot film locations: movies included Cousins (1988), Intersection (with Richard Gere and Sharon Stone, 1993), Dead Reckoning (with Cliff Robertson, 1989), and Impolite (starring Christopher Plummer, 1992) – a comedy about a German hunter looking for the Sasquatch. A high-speed False Creek Ferry hurtles him to the Island. "A jewel of activity in the background," as director David Hauka put it.

Documentaries shot on the Island have covered the waterfront, from wild salmon, to a profile of the late theatre director Larry Lillo. TV series include J.J. Starbuck, Stingray, and Wiseguy. Whatever a director needs, Granville Island has it: restaurants, art school, theatres, cement factory, children's playground, a fabulous market and a zillion dollar city view framed by a bridge. Cousins, with Danson and Rossellini, was filmed complete with crowds and behind the scenes drama. To keep sprinklers from going off in one of the fish stalls during long hours under hot lights, the crew covered the heads with styrofoam cups stuffed with wet newspaper. Unfortunately, they overlooked one near a bathroom, which eventually shot off like a geyser. The crew cleaned up the shop while fire engines raced to the scene. During breaks, Isabella shopped around the Island like a real person; store owners were charmed.



Crowds gathered around tumbling mats in the courtyard to watch

AND ON SCREEN

George Campbell

dazzling gymnastics displays for the TV movie, Perfect Body (1997), a drama about young athletes turning to bulemia to keep their weight down. Temptation loomed large in the nearby French bakery. The ABC Christmas movie, Other Women's Children (1993), was filmed in Blackberry Books, with the store's sales people as extras, dressed as elves. The Blue Parrot popped up again as the setting for a book launch party in the CBC movie special, The Diary of Evelyn Lau (1994). The view of water and city lights was lustrous, the aftermath less so. The freezers, which gave off a bedevilling hum, had to be disconnected; one was left unplugged, and producers added $2,000 worth of rotting fish to an already tight budget.

For trickiest choreography, A Touch of Evil Upside Down (1997), wins hands down. The seven-minute art film recreated the famous opening scene from Orson Welles' 1958 A Touch of Evil, in one long, continuous shot. Thirty extras showed up instead of the 60 needed; extras kept doubling up, changing hats and coats to look like different characters as they raced through the frigid February night from one end of the scene to the other.

For years, Bridges Restaurant was one of the most popular locations. Then, one busy evening in 1989, a fellow with a clapper appeared at the entrance to the bistro and announced, "We're shooting sound upstairs, we want quiet." The patrons laughed and continued talking. "Film companies say 'don't worry, we'll shoot around whatever's happening.'" says Bridges manager Peter Horwood. "But when they ordered dead quiet in the kitchen and in the bistro, that was the beginning of the end of our movie career." When they shot fight scenes in the upstairs restaurant all night and 13 seconds ended up on the screen, Bridges took itself off location scouts' lists.

Commercials, with less baggage to carry around, are ideally suited to the tight squeeze on the Island. Casting for the Molson series "I Am Canadian," the director spotted members of the Granville Island Rowing Club out in the water near the freighters, and chased out to talk them into starring in the commercial. When a director saw Jozef Toth, an eccentric balancing rocks at the entrance to the Island, he put him into a B.C. Tel Mobility commercial – as "Rock Star."

– Eve Rockett

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol to music. The musical has become a December tradition.

With two matinees a day throughout the school year and evening performances by outside theatre companies, the Waterfront could be the busiest house in Vancouver. Across the street, Carousel maintains its offices, prop and costume shops as well as classroom and rehearsal space. The theatre school runs three sessions a year for 600 students of all ages. Some are adults who have pursued other career paths, then decided to return to their first love. Others are teens who go through a full six-year program in acting, improvisation, scenework, film or dance. Carousel has become one of the leading feeder schools for post-secondary institutions such as the National Theatre School and Langara College's Studio 58. In fine weather, rehearsals often take place on the lawn in front of the Carousel offices on Cartwright Street. Carousel also puts on a free mini-Shakespeare festival every August outside Performance Works. Audiences come across the scene casually, filing out of restaurants or just out for a stroll, but slowly grow and stay rooted to the spot: some performances end to the clapping of 700 pairs of hands. One audience a few years back become so rapt that even a downpour during the final act could not unseat them. The company later invited them indoors for a cup of hot chocolate.

■ Veteran actor Bernard Cuffling appears in Mavor Moore's musical adaptation of A Christmas Carol, an annual tradition at the Waterfront Theatre.
■ Participating in art; a creative movement class for pre-schoolers at Arts Umbrella (opposite).

WORKS OF ART

As any actor, singer, dancer or comedian could tell you, the finished performance is only half the story. Behind the scenes, costumes and sets must be made, altered and stored, tours must be booked, and shows rehearsed. Granville Island provides not just a stage for the performing arts, but also a home for these other activities, which, for a change, are visible to the public. You can see it by peering through the windows of the Arts Club production shop on Cartwright Street. Inside, workers make sets and costumes not just for Island productions, but for shows staged throughout the city. You can see it in the goings-on around Carousel Theatre's school and head office, fronted by a large picture window, just up the block. But the best place to see the process of creation is Performance Works.

David Cooper

The last performance space developed on the Island, Performance Works was built by the Granville Island administration in 1991 to provide a large, multi-purpose space for theatre and dance companies from around the city to rehearse their shows.

Vancouver had never had such a facility. And as a result, there are still bugs to be worked out relating to the stage configuration, sound and lighting. But day-in and day-out, you can see professional companies to children's classes from Arts Umbrella working on their routines in the gymnasium-sized space. The large windows are meant to encourage passersby to stand and watch; part of the rehearsal, after all, is getting used to performing in front of an audience. Performance Works also serves as a stage for finished shows, most notably the free Shakespeare Under the Stars shows every August.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Just as the earliest planning documents specify artisanal space in the redeveloped Granville Island, planners also recognized the need for a major educational institution. It would do a number of things: first, it would provide a counterbalance to the market realm, attracting a different kind of person at a different hour. Second, it would anchor other activities they hoped would flourish on the Island. Efforts to attract a naval college came to nought, before general manager Russell Brink set his sights on the Vancouver School of Art.

Though running continuously in one incarnation or another since 1925, the VSA was something of an orphan. It had gone through several changes of name and location. In the mid-70s, it was spread over half a dozen sites around the city's downtown core. Instructors had to shuttle from one classroom to another by car; there was no interaction between painters, say, and industrial designers, and the lack of a central campus hampered the college's visibility and credibility.

Leslie Scragg

One big campus on Granville Island could change all that, Brink promised the VSA's management and trustees. The pitch worked, as the VSA abandoned its plans to establish a campus on the site of the Justice Institute of B.C. in West Point Grey and opted for two vacant Island factories, formerly Westex Manufacturing and British Wire Ropes, in 1978. The actual move took place two years later.

Since then the student body has doubled, from 450 to 900 full-time students, not to mention 200 to 300 part-time or non-credit students at any one time. The design component has expanded beyond the confines of graphic design into industrial design and electronic communications. The arts side, too, has seen growth in the areas of film production and animation. By the late 1980s, ECIAD, the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design as it was now known, had once again outgrown its premises, and was forced to rent space in neighbouring Kitsilano. Finally in 1994, the new south building opened, giving the Institute its first proper library and auditorium, and allowing operations to once again consolidate on Granville Island.

Performance Works

Built: 1992. Original building dates from 1920's
Renovated: 1995
Architect: Barbara Dalrymple, Barbara Dalrymple Architect

The sharp-angled intersection of Johnston and Cartwright streets, at the southeast corner of Granville Island, is an enduring legacy to Barbara Dalrymple. Dalrymple redesigned four buildings here, the most notable being Performance Works. Vacant or occupied by semi-legitimate squatters (some now running prosperous businesses elsewhere on the Island) throughout the 1980s, the old machine shop was earmarked to provide something the arts community in Vancouver desperately needed: permanent, technically equipped rehearsal space.

Courtesy of the CMFC

Kim Stallknecht

Performance Works then and now (above): once a home for squatters, now a much-needed developmental space for dancers, actors and musicians.

The Island presents an ideal setting for an art school, argues Greg Bellerby, curator of the Institute's Charles H. Scott Gallery. It's in the heart of the city – forcing the students and artists to engage with the city every time they come to class – yet it is somehow detached from the city. Space and time are not commodities here as they might be at the corner of Georgia and Burrard. Among art schools Emily Carr is known to stress art theory, and to encourage cross-pollination between different media and art movements.

Some of the graduates coming out of the tin sheds on Granville Island can attest to that. Douglas Coupland, best known as the author of *Generation X* and other works of fiction, earned his degree here as a sculptor. After working in various media and completing a huge Japanese-inspired painting as his grad project, Ian Verchere went on to become creative director of Radical Entertainment, the developer of the ESPN Digital Games. ECIAD-trained animators and computer designers have played a significant role in turning Vancouver into one of the world centres for video games.

Among patrons of fine art around the world, Vancouver is better known as a hotbed of photo-conceptual art, and here too ECIAD played a central role. Ian Wallace, who pioneered this genre of social commentary through staged photographic images, has been on the faculty for 25 years. His students, including Stan Douglas, Roy Arden and Jin Mee Yoon, have gone on to exhibit their works internationally.

Six young design students went on to create Proto/zoan, a celebrated interior design collective in Vancouver in the late 1980s. ECIAD also gave rise to a loose-knit group of painters, known locally as the "New Romantics" after the title of their show at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1986. Needless to say, the canvases of Attila Richard Lukacs, Graham Gillmore, Derek Root and Angela Grossman fetch a somewhat higher price today than when they hung in the Institute's Concourse Gallery.

The Concourse, which exhibits students' work, and the larger Charles H. Scott Gallery, which features travelling exhibits of work in all the disciplines taught at the Institute, are open to the public seven days a week. For two weeks in May, the entire school becomes a gallery to house the grad show, made up of some 600 student graduation projects. There is also a student art sale in March, where keen-eyed connoisseurs come in search of the next century's Picasso. Mostly free to the

public, ECIAD also presents an ongoing series of lectures and seminars in its new lecture theatre.

STUDIOS AND GALLERIES

The Island's visual arts do not begin and end with Emily Carr. Outside lie a number of studios, shops and galleries. Through most of the 1980s the late Bill Reid, easily the most important figure in contemporary Northwest Coast Native art, maintained his workshop on Old Bridge Street. Casts and models for some of his best-known works, including the bronze Spirit of Haida Gwaii now installed outside the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and its smaller counterpart, the "Jade Canoe" at the Vancouver International Airport, were created here.

Today printmakers, glass artists and potters continue to make the Island their workplace. In the coming years, CMHC plans to develop affordable live-work studios in the Island's last vacant buildings along Railspur Alley as a way to encourage the fine-arts element. Thanks to its high traffic volume, however, the Island has already become British Columbia's number one retail site for crafts. The Federation of Canadian Artists, Crafts Association of B.C., Potters Guild of B.C. and Circle Craft Co-op, all maintain thriving commercial galleries on the Island. Here, within a short walking radius, you can see and purchase the work of member artists and artisans from across western Canada.

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

As adults, our relationship to art is primarily one of appreciation and, truth be told, consumption. But for a child, art is more than a spectator sport. Unfortunately, the creative process too often ends there, in elementary school. On Granville Island, there is an art school that attempts to fill in the space between the grade-school art class and the rarified air of the post-secondary art institute. It's called Arts Umbrella.

On a challenge from a friend, sculptor and arts educator Carol Henriquez founded Arts Umbrella in 1979 as a place to nurture painters, sculptors, potters, graphic artists, actors, dancers, photographers, filmmakers, even budding architects between the ages of two and 19. Though talent would not be the criterion for selection, the school still strives for what she calls excellence. The comprehensive dance program, for example, has become the western feeder school for the national ballet, and the Gifted Teen Program provides accelerated training in the visual arts for 15 kids considering an artistic career.

■ **Sidonne Boll (as Alice) and Mad Hatter C. Holte Davidson in Carousel Theatre's 1982 production of Alice In Wonderland (below).**

David Cooper, courtesy of Carousel Theatre Company and School

All this was just a pilot project at a False Creek co-op when then-Island manager Allan Hammond showed up at an open house in 1980, and suggested to Henriquez that she set up a permanent home on Granville Island. Today, the old stucco office building of Morrison Steel on Cartwright Street hosts 165 classes a week for 1,400 students. Including two-week summer camps and outreach programs to inner-city schools, Arts Umbrella teaches and touches close to 25,000 students a year. Tuitions are kept as low as possible, typically $95 for a 10-week program, and Henriquez boasts that no child

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

has been turned away for lack of funds. Still, less than two per cent of Arts Umbrella's budget comes from government. The bulk of funding comes from corporate donations.

A recent donation came from an Arts Umbrella alumnus, Chancz Perry, who after studying theatre at Langara College's Studio 58, became a television star on Shari Lewis' children's program. Doubtless more Arts Umbrella students will make a name for themselves as they reach adulthood. But as Henriquez points out, "For 90 to 95 per cent of these kids, it's really about enhancing their lives. The skills we teach are transferable to many walks of life."

There's an evangelical fervour all around Arts Umbrella, all about the power of art to influence the lives of children. The instructors are all working artists, and their experience here gives them a different view on their workaday world, a measure of hope. Watching children enthralled in the creative process, the visitor can see why.

THE SOUND OF STREET MUSIC

Music never played a prominent role in the planning or redevelopment of Granville Island. There are no music schools or recording studios or concert halls here (though live music is a regular feature at the Arts Club Lounge). Oddly enough, visitors nonetheless remember the Island as a place with music in the air. By and large, this has come about due to the natural proliferation of a particular species of performer: the busker.

Almost as soon as the Public Market opened in 1979, street performers identified it as one of the best places to be in the City. It had almost continuous crowds of people passing through at a lazy pace with change jingling in their pockets. It was enclosed and heated in the winter. What's more, management took a tolerant attitude to the presence of buskers. With a few exceptions, the buskers added to the Market's festive atmosphere. Before long though, too many buskers were drowning each other out and the competition for spots in the Market became fierce. Arguments broke out and vendors began complaining about buskers staying too long in front of their stalls. The Market coordinators then introduced some rules. The performers could not play in any one spot for longer than a half hour. Next, they had to sign up for a spot. Still, the buskers became more unruly. "There's an anarchistic streak in every busker. If you put in a rule they'll look for a way to break it," says Alan Scales, former head of the Vancouver International Comedy Festival, who was eventually hired by the Granville Island administration to register and oversee the buskers. Now buskers must register once a year, and sign up for outdoor spots in a daily draw. The registration does not involve an audition. Anybody who wants to can play.

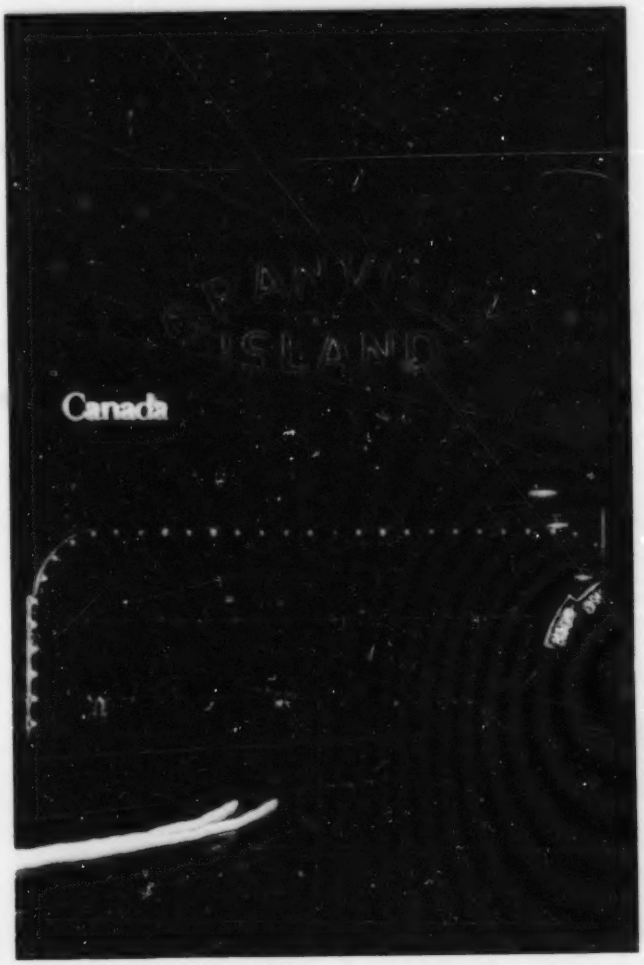
Still, the transition did not go perfectly smoothly. Scales cites the example of Bradley Brewster, a homeless man with a two-string guitar and several teeth missing. Told he had to fill out a registration card, Brewster burst

out crying, claiming, "You just want to get rid of me." The registration card asked for a permanent address, which he did not have at the time. The Island administration persisted though, and saw to it that Brewster got photo identification. Today Brewster wears his busker card everywhere. He's cleaned himself up and merchants chipped in to buy him a new guitar. A store on the Island even reported his buying sheet music. One Christmas, the Market tenants got together to buy him a basket of caviar and exotic cheese. "He's a member of a community for once," Scales says. "He's found a home here."

Other Island regulars have markedly different stories to tell. Juggler David Aitken turned down a career in engineering to perform, and today he tours with festivals and performs in Asia. The Granville Island Blues is a rockabilly quartet that simply doesn't like the idea of touring or the club circuit. They have a loyal following that waits for their street shows, however, and they released a compact disc this year. Nicholas Mah likes to get away from his day job as a studio musician to play classical guitar to live audiences. Thor the Piano Player (actually a schmaltzy organist) and singer-songwriter Cowboy Bob have become regular crowd favourites. Violin prodigy Nicole Sandford – part of a family string quartet known as Divertimento – received an impromptu scholarship to the Vancouver School of Music from some fans at the Circle Craft Co-op.

Recently, the City of Vancouver has taken an interest in the Island's relatively harmonious busking regime, and sought the Island staff's expertise in the drafting of City bylaws. Legal instruments are only so effective, Scales warns. It's more about making buskers part of the community, instead of a quasi-criminal element. "The rest of the city is a dog-eat-dog world for buskers. They have no common interest," he theorizes. "Granville Island for them is a refuge."

■ Children's string quartet plays the Market courtyard (opposite). ■ Give my regards: the Island's three permanent and many impromptu stages ensure there's always a show going on (bottom).



J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

In the event

David Cooper

CHAPTER 8

FESTIVALS AND SEASONAL EVENTS

One of the words *most often used to describe Granville Island is "festive." Something about the noise, the interaction, the foot traffic – it's by nature bustling, yet outside the everyday rat race. But Vancouverites and visitors alike also come to the Island in the knowledge that, "There's always something going on." And there is. Virtually every month on the calendar, there is some special event or other taking place on the Island.*

Children's theatre one month, Canada Day celebrations the other. Some, such as the special guest appearances at the Kids Market, happen on the spur of the moment. Others represent traditions that have been building over the 20 years since the Island's redevelopment began. Among those, two annual popular successes, both closely identified with Granville Island, stand out: the Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival and the Vancouver International Comedy Festival.

AUTUMNAL WORDS

Truth, sometimes, is stranger than fiction. Spectators were slowly filing out of a seminar on crime writing entitled "The Third Degree" at the 1991 Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival when a scuffle broke out. In a fit of paranoia, a Mexican refugee in attendance, Jose Renato Perez, pulled a butcher's knife out of his pants and fatally stabbed a perfect stranger, Robert Chartier. Other men in the area pursued and caught Perez as he tried to escape. The case seemed to confound everything the seminar's host, criminologist Neil Boyd, knew about murder. The guest writer Roger Caron, meanwhile, carefully avoided any contact with the incident. A year later he was arrested and charged in relation with a series of robberies.

Though this is hardly the kind of incident its organizers would encourage, since its inception in 1988 the Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival has endeavoured to bring words off the page and into the City's literary life. It has set works of prose and poetry to music at the Literary Cabaret. It has transformed short stories as dramatic readings with actors. Writer David McFadden literally broke a leg on the way to a reading; he did eventually appear, with a freshly dried cast. Alma Lee, the festival's artistic director, remembers watching with trepidation, one particularly stormy October night, as Peter Ustinov, under a festival tent at the False Creek Community Centre, read from his works. A pool of water slowly grew over the British author's head, threatening the author and the audience with a thorough drenching and the whole tent with collapse. Fortunately, the tent held up for the duration of the reading, at the end of which festival workers hurriedly tipped the canvas to drain off the water.

The first year the festival took place, there were just three other literary festivals of this kind in Canada. The City of Vancouver's cultural planner, Lorenz von Fersen, approached Lee, a Canadian Writers' Union veteran recently arrived on the West Coast, with the idea of a book festival. His instincts

■ The du Maurier International Jazz Festival (opposite) makes a visit to the Island every summer. ■ Molly Parker and Eric McCormack relive The Passion of Dracula at the Arts Club Mainstage, 1996 (below).

David Cooper, Courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

were right, Lee recalls. "It was an event waiting to happen."

Lee's subsequent research showed Vancouverites to have the highest book readership, book sales and library usage in all of Canada. In contrast to its sometimes superficial image, Vancouver is in fact a "booky" City, she attests. The challenge, as with all literary festivals, was to turn the normally sedentary activity of reading into a performance. She wanted the festival to celebrate not only writing but also reading. As locations go, Granville Island was a natural. It had the performance space, as well as the range of places for festival-goers to go for coffee or a meal. Its insular nature only added to the sense that something's happening here.

■ A Midsummer Night's performance of Shakespeare Under the Stars, the Island's free theatre festival (below).
■ Local colour: Allan Morgan, Allan Zinyk and Leslie Jones discover It's Blowin', Glowin' and Growin' on Bowen at the Arts Club, (opposite, top) 1995.
■ A flame-throwing troupe lights up the Vancouver International Comedy Festival (opposite, middle).

Lee lined up some 30 writers to appear at events for the first Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival in 1988 and was astonished to see 5,400 paying customers show up for the authors' readings. At one event, while Tomson Highway read from his controversial play *The Rez Sisters*, an elderly Native woman in the audience stood up and, in Cree, chastised the playwright for the disrespectful language he used in the script. Highway was reduced to tears.

Over the years the festival has grown along with the profile of Canadian authors. Virtually all the modern CanLit heavyweights – Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Michael Ondaatje, W.O. Mitchell, Alice Munro, Carol Shields – have appeared at the festival, often delivering the keynote Duthie Lecture. The festival has introduced new writers too, such as Bowen Island's Nick Bantock, shortly after the publication of his illustrated blockbuster *Griffin & Sabine*. It's also been a place to catch up-and-coming American writers such as Richard Ford and Elizabeth George. The festival strives for a balance of one-third British Columbian writers, one-third other Canadian, and one-third international. The audience, too, has grown, to a reliable total of 10,000 year after year, despite the flowering of other literary events in Vancouver and the start of regular public readings at the new central branch of the Vancouver Public Library. The festival runs for five days around the fourth weekend in October.

Courtesy of the Carousel Theatre Company and School

SUMMER LAUGHS

A group of television executives flew up from Los Angeles a few years back for the Vancouver International Comedy Festival. They were scouting talent and wanted to check out the stand-up showcase that year. At other performances, they

David Cooper, Courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

were baffled. The shows didn't fit at all into their rather narrow definition of comedy.

For devoted fans, however, people who call in for tickets months early, before the final lineup is announced, the annual Comedy Festival is right on the money. When most people think of a comedy festival, they think of stand-up comedy: one performer at a microphone, telling stories peppered with punchlines to keep the laughter going. That's not what the Vancouver International Comedy Festival is about. For 11 days bridging the cusp of July and August, rapt audiences watch theatrical skits specially commissioned for the festival, circus acts, clowning, physical comedy, *commedia del arte*, musical parody. Shows can last five hours or more.

Courtesy of Aldrich/Pears Associates Ltd.

During the day, most of the comics perform for free at outdoor locations around the Island. At night, they present more formal but no less interactive shows at the Island's theatres.

Like many cultural events in Vancouver, the Comedy Fest grew out of Expo 86. Chris Rosatti and Jane Howard Baker, who lined up comedy at the 1986 World's Fair across False Creek, decided to launch the festival a year later, in 1987. Over the years the format and the personalities have changed – the show was produced by festival veteran Alan Scales for the past 10 years – but the philosophy and the Granville Island location have endured.

Italian comic Leo Bassi kept the audience in a state of tension between laughter and fear during one especially memorable performance at the Arts Club Revue theatre in 1993. Bassi made his entrance down a rope from the rafters; he left cryptic notes wrapped in $20 bills around the room, and booby-trapped tables and chairs by removing one leg or smearing shaving cream on the seat. Towards the end of the show, he mused

Twelve Months of Special Events

January -
The Kiss Project

February -
Fusion

March -
Spring Break Theatre Festival

April -
Chefs! in the Market Series Kick Off

May -
Bluegrass Festival

June -
du Maurier International Jazz Festival

July -
Canada Day, Vancouver International Comedy Festival

August -
Wooden Boat Festival, Shakespeare Under the Stars

September -
Great Garbage Can Art Contest & Auction

October -
Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival, Harvest Fair

November -
Vancouver New Play Festival

December -
Winter Solstice Lantern Procession, Festival of Song

David Cooper, Courtesy of the Arts Club Theatre

were baffled. The shows didn't fit at all into their rather narrow definition of comedy.

For devoted fans, however, people who call in for tickets months early, before the final lineup is announced, the annual Comedy Festival is right on the money. When most people think of a comedy festival, they think of stand-up comedy: one performer at a microphone, telling stories peppered with punchlines to keep the laughter going. That's not what the Vancouver International Comedy Festival is about. For 11 days bridging the cusp of July and August, rapt audiences watch theatrical skits specially commissioned for the festival, circus acts, clowning, physical comedy, *commedia del arte*, musical parody. Shows can last five hours or more.

Courtesy of Aldridge/Pears Associates Ltd.

During the day, most of the comics perform for free at outdoor locations around the Island. At night, they present more formal but no less interactive shows at the Island's theatres.

Like many cultural events in Vancouver, the Comedy Fest grew out of Expo 86. Chris Rosatti and Jane Howard Baker, who lined up comedy at the 1986 World's Fair across False Creek, decided to launch the festival a year later, in 1987. Over the years the format and the personalities have changed – the show was produced by festival veteran Alan Scales for the past 10 years – but the philosophy and the Granville Island location have endured.

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Arts Club Theatre

Built: c. 1920
Renovated: 1979
Architect: Richard Archambault, Downs/Archambault

The flagship of the Island's theatres would be housed in a former chain factory next door to the Public Market. One of the challenges the architects faced was providing acoustics and soundproofing appropriate to a theatre in a space made for forging steel. Only the east wall had any kind of noise-deadening fibrous fill; the rest was the same corrugated metal found throughout the Island. The cavernous, unobstructed space, however, proved to have quite good acoustics and few "dead spots" among the seats. Outside, Archambault specified the brown theme to distinguish this night spot from the gold and grey of the Public Market alongside.

Courtesy of the Vancouver Public Library

Kim Stallknecht

The Arts Club Theatre then (as Canada Chain & Forge Co.) and now.

about making this one his last, and burning down the theatre behind him!

"He was a human manifestation of what we're trying to accomplish," Scales says. If this attitude sounds elitist or "out there," Scales was not the only admirer. The Italian comic also appealed to a group of loggers from small-town B.C., in town to compete in a loggers' sports festival at Grouse Mountain. They enjoyed the show so much they invited Bassi to be a guest competitor at their axe-throwing competition the next day.

You won't find many television stars or Vegas acts at the Comedy Fest. You will find performers and troupes from around the world who have carved their own niche in live entertainment, acts such as Penn & Teller, Eddie Izzard, Lorne Elliot and Gallagher. In fact, the festival organized a whole tour for a circus troupe from Kenya to coincide with the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria. Somehow it all comes together, Scales says. "It's not ha-ha-ha comedy. It's a feeling of joy."

THE KISS OF WINTER

The seasonal performances don't stop with books and humour, however. One of Vancouver's up-and-coming festivals, going into its fifth year in 1999, is The Kiss Project. Spearheaded by choreographer Judith Marcuse, The Kiss Project brings together actors, dancers, singers, musicians and even visual artists over a month in January to workshops and scripted performances based on the simple theme of the kiss. "The kiss is a metaphor for connection," Marcuse explains. From its home at the Performance Works, audiences have seen the likes of:

Stage actor Nicola Cavendish giving a monologue derived from conversations with prostitutes. The women she interviewed came to the performance.

A "mini soap opera" written by 11-year-old Sonhu Purhar and directed by local theatre veteran Roy Surette that, in Marcuse's words, "had the audience on the floor."

Courtesy of the CMHC

Eighteen five-minute pieces melded into a single evening's collage of entertainment.

Nineteen ninety-eight marked the first year of the Spring Break Theatre Festival, where matinee performances for kids play every day at the Waterfront Theatre and ticketed evening shows at Performance Works.

FREE SHOWS

Nowhere in Vancouver can you see the range and sheer volume of free shows as you can on Granville Island. Beginning with the Chinese New Year in late January or early February, visitors can take part in Fusion. Fusion is a celebration of multiculturalism featuring cooking demonstrations by some of the City's foremost chefs in the Public Market. The Market's courtyard fills with the sounds of banjos and mandolins every May with the Bluegrass Festival. Come June, the du Maurier International Jazz Festival makes an appearance on the Island with free performances during the day at the Public Market courtyard. Then on Canada Day, July 1, the whole family is welcomed to an all-day celebration with interactive displays and games.

David Cooper

Long associated just with Jericho Beach, the Vancouver Folk Music Festival has in recent years begun staging free satellite concerts at the Public Market courtyard over two weekends in mid-July. And for a midsummer night's dream, at the Performance Works' outdoor stage every night in August, young actors perform classics from the Bard in the Shakespeare Under the Stars Festival.

Lalo Efejo, courtesy of the Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival

Not all events happen on a stage, of course. For those who prefer to see things at their own pace, there's the Wooden Boat Festival. During the last weekend in August, seafaring folk from all up and down the Pacific coast gather at the Island's west docks to show off their varnished beauties in one big nautical open house, topped off by the annual sailpast.

December is the month for free choral music as the Festival of Song brings Lower Mainland choirs down to the Island for a series of free concerts.

More than 2,000 children and parents now mark the winter solstice on December 21 with a lantern procession. Beginning at the False Creek Community Centre, they parade their home-made paper and scrap lanterns around the Island.

■ Pierre Berton and Peter Newman bring Canadian history to life at the 1998 Vancouver International Writers' (& Readers') Festival.
■ Cast members from Carousel Theatre's 1997 production of A Christmas Carol perform al fresco outside the Public Market
■ Based in nearby Vanier Park, the Vancouver Children's Festival goes Island-hopping in May (opposite).

Hyper activity

Amanda Murphy

CHAPTER 9

SPORTS AND RECREATION

"Ready... and... reach!" *Andrea Dillon yells from the escort boat. Without missing a beat, the paddlers in the dragon boat alongside subtly alter their stroke to relieve tired muscles. This is the False Creek Women's Dragon Boat Team, and Dillon is its coach. Tonight the team is developing a race plan, a series of strokes meant to help the heavy boat accelerate and plane through the typical 600 metres of a dragon boat race.*

Toni Alexander

■ False Creek Women's Dragon Boat Team with manager/boatbuilder Vincent Lo (left).

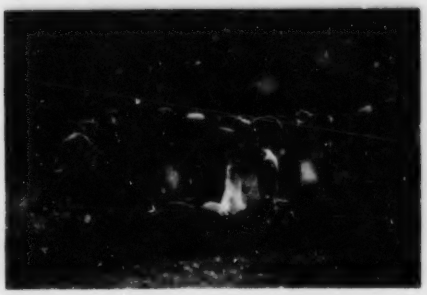
The strokes have names like "power 10," "power 20," and "six-16."

The False Creek Women's Dragon Boat Team has built a dynasty in its sport. Here, at its Thursday evening practice, it just looks like 22 athletic women ranging in age from 18 to 54. They're insurance agents, nurses, lawyers, railroad workers. But in the world of dragon boating, a competitive kind of paddling derived from Southeast Asian war canoes, these are the Canadian women's champions for the last 10 years. Three times they won the triple crown of dragon boating with first-place finishes in Hong Kong, Singapore and Vancouver, in 1989, 1990 and 1992. In 1990 and again in 1995, they set course records at major races. In 1999, they're travelling to Nottingham, England, for the world championships.

Tina Lee

"This team has had such a reputation over time," says Marina McCready, the team captain, from home port in Alder Bay, on the Island's southeastern shore. It all began when Heather Taylor, a competitive flatwater kayaker and marathon canoer, rounded up a mixed team of men and women to compete in the first dragon boat race that took place in False Creek during Expo 86. The prize was a trip to race in Hong Kong that year, and the False Creek squad won. But the Hong Kong race only allowed single-sex teams. The prize money went to finance an all-men's team; the women were left to raise their own funds to compete. But compete they did, upstaging the men, and the rest is history. Today there's a long waiting list of hopefuls, ready to join the False Creek Women if a spot comes open.

In years when the False Creek Women go on tour, the practice schedule gears up to three times a week. They're often seen plying the waters of False Creek. (At full race pace, the team's paddles stab the water as many as 80 times a minute.) Occasionally, to condition themselves for less sheltered race sites like Hong Kong, they venture out into the chop of English Bay. "One night we managed to sink the boat," McCready laughs.



Bill Almond

■ Pre-paddling warm-up (above); exhibits at B.C. Sport Fishing Museum (below).

JOURNEY INTO THE BEEHIVE

The False Creek Women represent just one of the occupants of the False Creek Community Centre, Granville Island's recreational hub. If you drop by on an always-humming Tuesday evening, for example, you might see rowers gathered in a circle on the grass for pre-sail stretches while recreational dragon boat teams come and go, often wringing out their shirts after a wet workout.

Inside, in the community centre's Lind Hall, participants practice feldenkrais, the art of awareness through movement. Next door, from the Tyee Community Hall, comes the sound of "Shuffle left, shuffle right, back and step, back and step," as a group learns how to line dance. In the lounge, a lone, middle-aged man works at his laptop computer by the fireplace. Meanwhile, drop-ins work out in the fitness centre, and down the hall in the Swamp Willow children's studio, a mixed class of kids and adults takes lessons in judo. The offerings in the community centre's activity calendar

Rita Simonar

On and Under the Water

If it wasn't for the skyline in the background, you could be in any fishing port along the Northwest Coast. The boats for sale, the fishing charters, the sailing lessons. If you want to sail or motor over, troll through or even dive under the sea, there's a dealer, rental operation, guide or school in the Maritime Market to help you.

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

Sailing

Cooper Boating Center and Wind Valley Sailing School both offer a range of courses designed for beginner sailors to certified skipper and navigator training. Many of these opportunities are combined with vacation-style cruises to popular destinations such as the Gulf Islands and Desolation Sound. Outlets like these offer boat rentals, as well as management programs for individually-owned watercraft. Foreshore Projects, the Maritime Market's master tenant, rents space and use of the boat lift in its public boat maintenance yard. Here sailors park their vessels for repairs and maintenance. (Patrons can either hire professionals, of which there are several located here, or do the upkeep themselves.) And if you're looking to buy your own boat, look no further than the docks off the Maritime Market, which features the largest continuous assemblage of used boats in British Columbia.

Tina Lee

Saltwater Fishing

Travellers intent on hooking one of British Columbia's famed chinook or coho salmon can leave for fishing charters right off the docks of Granville Island. Daytrips of five or more hours head out from here to Howe Sound while longer excursions and fly-ins head to the even better fishing grounds up the coast. Book ahead in the busy summer season. Even in the off-season, the ground fishing for snapper, lingcod and halibut can be excellent. Tight lines!

Freshwater Fishing

Never mind the smell of salt in the air; Granville Island also happens to be home to Ruddick's Fly Shop, perhaps B.C.'s best-known fly-fishing store and school. Anglers can spend hours pouring over drawers filled with literally hundreds of fly designs. There's also a full range of equipment for fishing and tying your own flies, not to mention fly-casting and fishing technique courses and field trips led by co-owner Cathy Ruddick and guest experts.

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids

Families across Vancouver mark the Saturday in the middle of May on their kitchen calendars. That's the day that the Children's Waterpark opens. Remember running through the lawn sprinkler's stream as a kid? The Waterpark takes that same fun idea, makes it legit and expands it with a network of pipes, fountains, slides, sprinklers and drains. The children provide the high-decibel soundtrack. This, in fact, is the largest and most popular free children's attraction in North America. As many as 1,000 kids may pass a hot summer day here, says Hanna Maron, director of the False Creek Community Centre. The community centre manages the facility on behalf of the Granville Island administration, which provides an annual grant to cover operating costs.

David Cooper

Spread over a half-acre of undulating pavement, the Waterpark features separate areas for toddlers and children six and older. In the mid-1990s, a waterslide was added. Though the Waterpark closes following the Labour Day weekend in September, a large adventure playground next door provides fun and exercise for pre-teens 12 months a year.

include "Getting Psyched: Cognitive training for competitive athletes."

"We're the only community centre in Vancouver, perhaps in all of B.C., that has a dock," boasts Doug Taylor, activity programmer for the city-owned facility. That means the FCCC has unique opportunities for public canoeing, kayaking and sailing programs. There are also popular yoga, tai chi, basketball, volleyball and tennis programs. In the summer the outdoor courts here are home to the False Creek/West Side Tennis Tournament. The False Creek Tennis Club, also based here, puts on annual mixed doubles tournaments. You can usually spot a number of the club's 130 members playing casual tennis every Sunday morning.

On a seasonal basis, the community centre comes alive with the Easter in the Creek egg hunt, summer day camp for nine to 13-year-olds, and a craft fair in November. The Winter Solstice Lantern Procession, where children and adults parade their home-made illuminated artwork around the Island, attracts some 2,500 lantern-makers and onlookers every December 21. While serving as a recreational resource to the City, False Creek manages to offer something different from the City's other community centres. It's the Island way.

BOATS BUILT FOR SPEED

Attached to the community centre are several sheds lined by wire mesh. Inside lies a fantastic array of boats: dragon boats, oversized voyageur canoes, sleek fibreglass outrigger canoes with their *amas* dangling aside, flatwater kayaks, marathon canoes. If you can paddle it and race it, you'll find it here.

This is the home of the False Creek Racing Canoe Club, the largest such club in North America. In 1985, "There wasn't a real paddling community in Vancouver," says Heather Taylor, one of the club's founding members. There were perhaps 40 flatwater kayakers and marathon canoers who had retired from national-level competition but

Kathryn Hatashita-Lee

Michael Remek

still wanted to race. Most paddled out at Burnaby Lake, but they still didn't have a place to store their boats. The club negotiated with the new False Creek Community Centre to set up its boat shed and office there, and it fast became the hub for paddling in British Columbia. As the first club to acquire dragon boats, False Creek soon developed a roster of 30 affiliated teams. Thanks to the popularity of the annual Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival at the east end of False Creek, dragon boating remains the club's main attraction.

Around 1987, the club acquired its first voyageur canoe. A group of six members, full of enthusiasm, promptly paddled it all the way around Stanley Park and into Coal Harbour. But lacking the time and energy to paddle back, they portaged over Georgia Street to Lost Lagoon. Heralded by the honking of geese, they crossed the lagoon and portaged again to Second Beach and thence back to the Island (fortunately without once encountering a member of Vancouver's finest).

Club member Hugh Fisher brought the first outrigger canoe to B.C. from California. Club members re-christened the black, six-man vessel the *Burrard* and tried paddling it across the Strait of Georgia from Nanaimo to False Creek. About two-thirds of the way across, the boat got swamped and its crew had to be rescued by an escort boat. The *Burrard*, however, still serves as a training boat for the various outrigger clubs that have surfaced around B.C. in False Creek's wake.

Eight hundred people join the False Creek Racing Canoe Club every year to learn, to

■ Amateur and professional mariners alike make their boats ship-shape at the Maritime Market's drydock. ■ The False Creek Community Centre plays host to annual tennis tournaments (opposite).

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

train or to just use the boat shed. "It's always had a racing focus," says Taylor, a former national-level marathon canoer who won the masters' solo races for women at world outrigger championships in Western Samoa in 1992 and New Caledonia in 1994. In the 1992 world championships, club member Jackie Webber also won the women's open category and three teams from False Creek swept the medals for women's sixes. Along with the False Creek Women's Dragon Boat Team and several individual competitors in flatwater kayak (K-2) and marathon canoe, False Creek has become the centre of competitive paddling in Canada, especially for women, and the Racing Canoe Club its factory of champions.

■ Students climb aboard for a lesson with The Ecomarine Ocean Kayak School (bottom).
■ A maritime heritage: a sign of whimsy at Sea Village (opposite, top).
■ Dragon boat practice on False Creek (opposite, bottom).

THE ISLAND AND THE BAIDARKA

The ocean kayak we see today is a plastic or fibreglass version of the sealskin-and-whalebone baidarka made by the natives of Alaska's Aleutian Archipelago in days gone by. Virtually extinct in 1970, the enclosed one- or two-person paddle boat design was revived by a handful of eccentric boatbuilders in the decade to follow. One of them was George Dyson, the son of Nobel-laureate physicist Freeman Dyson and brother of computer guru Esther Dyson. George perfected the boat's design while living in a treehouse in suburban Coquitlam. Others built and paddled their own kayaks throughout the Pacific Northwest. The boat was perfect for travelling noiselessly around the coast's many sheltered coves and passages, leaving no trace behind.

Somewhere along the way, however, the baidarka came to town. That is, to Granville Island. And the paddling world would never be the same. Doug Simpson was a claim-staker in 1979, just as the Island was being

Rita Simonar

redeveloped. For half the year he'd head north, to Yukon or the Northwest Territories, to survey and stake out exploration sites for mining companies. That was his day job. For the rest of the year he'd work on his boats. He obtained a patent for a folding kayak made out of aluminum and waterproof fabric, instead of skin and bone. He knew some people who had been working out of a building at the east end of the Island. When the time came to redevelop the building as the Granville Island Hotel, the tenants vacated the building, and left Simpson a set of keys.

For nine months Simpson, a squatter in the building, worked on the design of what would become the Feathercraft line of kayaks. Then one day he was asked to report to the Island's general manager, Allan Hammond. Simpson feared he would be evicted, possibly even prosecuted for trespassing. Instead Hammond offered him a small shed to work in for the tolerable sum of $65 a month.

That same year, 1980, two other kayak devotees came to the Island. John Dowd was a sometime paddling instructor for the Canadian Armed Forces who opened Ecomarine, Canada's first ocean kayak store, in the Maritime Market. Jim Allen was an entrepreneur and adventurer who opened Ecosummer, the country's first "adventure tourism" operator to offer wilderness kayak tours up the British Columbia coast.

The decade to follow was a difficult one for the Island's kayak pioneers. Then as now, the business of making, selling and guiding kayaks was more about love than money. But the word slowly spread about this new form of wilderness travel. Dowd teamed up with fellow instructors Christine Robinson and Daniel Lewis to open the Ecomarine Ocean Kayak School. Classes of students walked the few steps down to the docks of False Creek for practice.

Michael Mong

Bill Almond

Andrew Klapatiuk

Then in the early 1990s, the popularity of sea kayaking soared. Some attributed its success to baby boomers tired of carrying a backpack. Some credited Seattle writer Joel Rodgers' best-selling book *The Hidden Coast: Kayaking from Alaska to Baja*. Regardless, Granville Island's kayakers found themselves at the crest of a wave.

Today Ecomarine has a second store and rental shop at Jericho Beach, as well as seven outlets in Japan and a fast-growing mail-order business. The school serves 1,500 students a year, so many that only introductory courses can be held in the increasingly congested waters of False Creek. A rival sea kayak store and school, Adventure Fitness, opened on the Island, along with a whitewater store, Predator Kayaks. Feathercraft is the first name in folding kayaks these days, and occupies a 5,000-square-foot shop across the parking lot from Doug Simpson's old squat, employing 30 people. Coming full circle, you can now build your own baidarka from a kit at the Brewery Creek Small Boat Shop in the Maritime Market. Concert pianist Jane Coop has been spotted putting the finishing touches on a skin boat, much as Simpson did 20 years ago.

"Vancouver is the centre of ocean kayaking worldwide," states Chris Ladner, Ecomarine's owner and guiding light for the last 10 years. And Granville Island is the centre of ocean kayaking in Vancouver. Here, where the countercultural attitude of the West Coast merges into the traffic of an urban mass audience, phenomena like the kayak craze happen. But the natural environment is a major influence too. It may not be Clayoquot Sound or South Moresby, but False Creek is still a "beautifully protected waterway," Ladner adds. Try it; you'll see. It's just a good place to go paddling.

■ Boat owner washes his craft (top).
■ Rent a kayak? Buy a used yacht? You can find it all at the Island's marinas (bottom).

Barry L. Donaldson

BOATSPOTTING

Some of the water craft seen on and around Granville Island

Working Boats

Seine Boat. *Among the largest vessels on the Creek, the 70-80-foot seine boats moored at the Fisheries & Oceans Canada dock just west of the Island are distinguished by their large net drums. A seiner catches salmon or herring by setting a net in a large circle, then "pursing" or closing the bottom of the net so the fish are trapped. The net and its catch are then reeled aboard. Roe herring openings on the outer coast can last just three hours for the whole year, and so boats owned by fish packers will often buy the catch*

Courtesy of the Government of Canada, Fisheries and Oceans

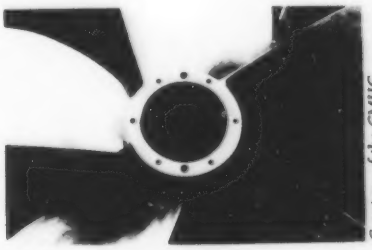
from other boats right on the fishing grounds and let them dip their nets again. The packers' boats display signs offering "cash" for fresh fish.

Lisa Hartley

Troller. *A troller catches mostly coho and chinook salmon by trolling 8-12 lines with lures or bait, much like an angler does. The lines are suspended from booms that are lowered on either side of the wheelhouse. While in port, the booms extend upright to the sky. The aluminum and wooden trollers moored in False Creek generally fish the outer coast and Inside Passage north and west of Vancouver Island through the summer.*

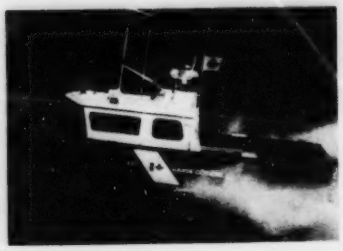
Lisa Hartley

Tug and Barge. *A remnant of False Creek's industrial past, tugs still tow barges mostly piled with gravel to the Ocean Cement plant on the Island and the City works yard by the Cambie Bridge. Typically 30-40 feet in length, the tugs are slow but very powerful and nimble at manoeuvring around the flat, rectangular barges. Though they usually pull the barges by means of a tow line, they can also nudge them into a wharf with their rubber-lined bows.*



Courtesy of the CMHC

Working Boats *continued*

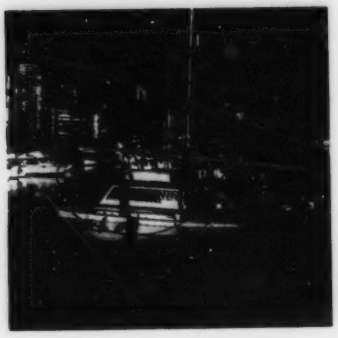


Courtesy of the Fisheries and Oceans Canadian Coast Guard

Coast Guard Vessel. *The Canadian Coast Guard operates a base near the foot of the Burrard Bridge. The distinctive red-hulled power boats, about 40 feet in length, venture into the Creek on patrol or to respond to emergencies on the water. Their craft are fast and very seaworthy in case of a problem further afield.*

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

Ferry. *Two companies, Aquabus and False Creek Ferries, operate about 17 small passenger ferries around the Creek during the peak summer season. Their roofs and removable plastic sides protect passengers from the elements. Some of the passengers are daily commuters; others local shoppers, tourists and business people going to lunch on the Island.*



Lisa Hartley

Gillnetter. *A gillnetter looks like a miniature version of a seine boat with the same net spool at the stern. Gillnets are set in a linear fashion along migration routes of the Pacific salmon. The fish tries to swim through the net and gets caught by its gills. The gillnetters moored in False Creek mostly fish the sockeye salmon runs entering the Fraser River estuary in the summer.*

Irmgard Carter, Courtesy of the Vancouver Police Department

Police Boat. *The Vancouver Police patrol the Creek in outboard boats. Distinctively black and usually carrying two or three officers, these boats offer the right combination of speed and manoeuvrability to fight crime on the waterfront.*

Lisa Hartley

Canal Barge. *Off the Maritime Market sits the Watercolour I, a 127-foot, steel-hulled barge built in 1929 to haul coal along the canals of Belgium. Moved to Florida in 1985, it was featured in the television show "Miami Vice" and was later beached by Hurricane Andrew. An unlikely providence brought it to Vancouver aboard three trucks in 1995. It now serves as a floating art gallery, meeting venue and honeymoon suite.*

Pleasure Boats

Lisa Hartley

Inboards. *Probably the most common species plying the waters of False Creek is the inboard motor launch or luxury yacht. Most are made of fibreglass with the occasional wood or aluminum interloper. Inboards have the same moorage rights as sailboats.*

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

Outboards. *Open-topped aluminum, fibreglass or inflatable boats with outboard motors are seldom moored in the Creek but rather arrive on trailers and the tops of cars. There is a boat-launch ramp at Vanier Park under the Burrard Bridge.*

David Cooper

Sailboats. *Large enclosed sailboats (at least 20 feet long) come in three varieties: long, double-masted schooners meant for cruising; smaller, tubby ketches for all-purpose sailing; and speedy sloops for racing. The boats moored at the east end of the Island are owned mostly by local sailors (Vancouver's only legal live-aboard marina is located just east of the Island on the southern shore). The dock by the public market offers short-term moorage for visitors and tourists. The boats moored off the Maritime Market are mostly for sale or rent.*

J. Wayne Kaulbach, Skylight Images

Paddle Boats

Lisa Hartley

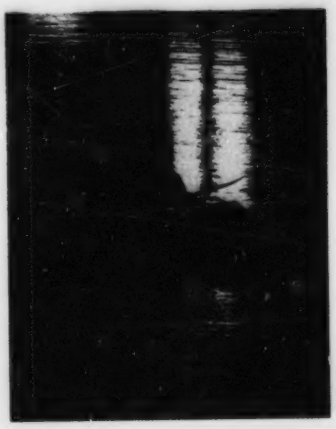
Sea Kayak. *Made out of fibreglass, plastic, kevlar or waterproof nylon, sea kayaks have become one of the world's most popular recreational paddle craft, and Granville Island has become a centre for their manufacture, sales, tours and training. Kayakers are often seen exploring the nooks and crannies of False Creek or practicing their 'Eskimo rolls'.*

Lisa Hartley

Marathon Canoe. *With its perfectly rectangular profile and low ride, this long-haul racer can be mistaken for a kayak. In fact, it's a light, narrow, open-deck canoe, similar to the high-keel sprint boats they race at the Olympics – only canoe marathons are known to last eight to 24 hours and cover 50-120 miles.*

Lisa Hartley

Open-Topped Kayak. *Also called a 'sport' or 'diving' kayak, this boat consists of a bouyant, molded-plastic hull. Originally designed for scuba divers or to scoot around in the surf, it brings to mind a 10-16-foot bath toy. For novice paddlers, open-top kayaks furnish a safe and easy introduction to ocean kayaking.*

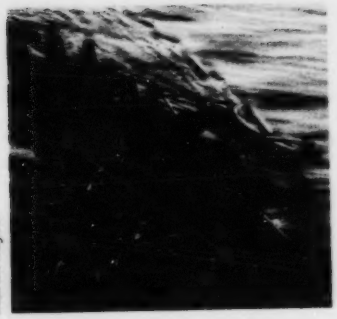


Lisa Hartley

Canoe. *Designed for river and lake travel, the open, fibreglass or plastic canoe is not worthy of the open salt chuck, but several False Creek residents use them as personal transportation.*

Lisa Hartley

Rowing Shell. *The classic Oxbridgean racing shell has been adapted for open water with a flatter, more stable hull that can handle a light chop. Sculling, in singles, doubles or fours, looks much like rowing a rowboat; each rower pulls on two oars. In sweep rowing, two, four or eight rowers each pull on a single oar.*

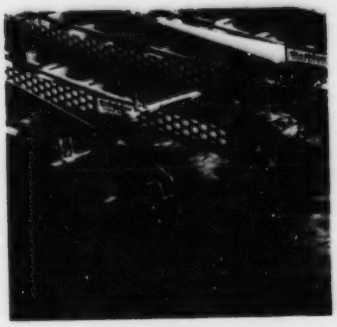


Marlin Bayes

Outrigger Canoe. *Run that Hawaii Five-O theme! This slender speedster comes with a pontoon called an 'ama' just to keep it from tipping over. 'Long boats' are made for surf, with easier turning ability, while 'leas' are best for flat-water racing. Both come in single and six-person sizes. Boats from the False Creek Racing Canoe Club regularly take training runs as far as Howe Sound.*

Marlin Bayes

Voyageur Canoe. *Resembling the freighters used by coureurs de bois, this oversized canoe with its unusually hooked prow was actually designed for a Centennial race across Canada in 1967. More recently, these 22-34-foot vessels have been embraced by dragon boat teams who never seem to get a full turnout for practices; a voyageur takes 6-14 paddlers. And no, it's not true all paddlers must learn dirty Québécois folk songs.*



Toni Alexander

Dragon Boats. *Evolved from a Southeast Asian war canoe (and not far different from the Northwest Coast Aboriginal variety), these seaworthy tubs feature a drummer in the bow and steersman in the stern and up to 22 paddlers jammed two abreast in between. The focus of the dragon boater's calendar is the Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival, with races for recreational and competitive teams, held each June at the east end of False Creek.*

Douglas Choy

Working Life

PART FOUR

Douglas Choy

Courtesy of the CMHC

Ross Rowe

Larry Wells

Reza Mojtahedi

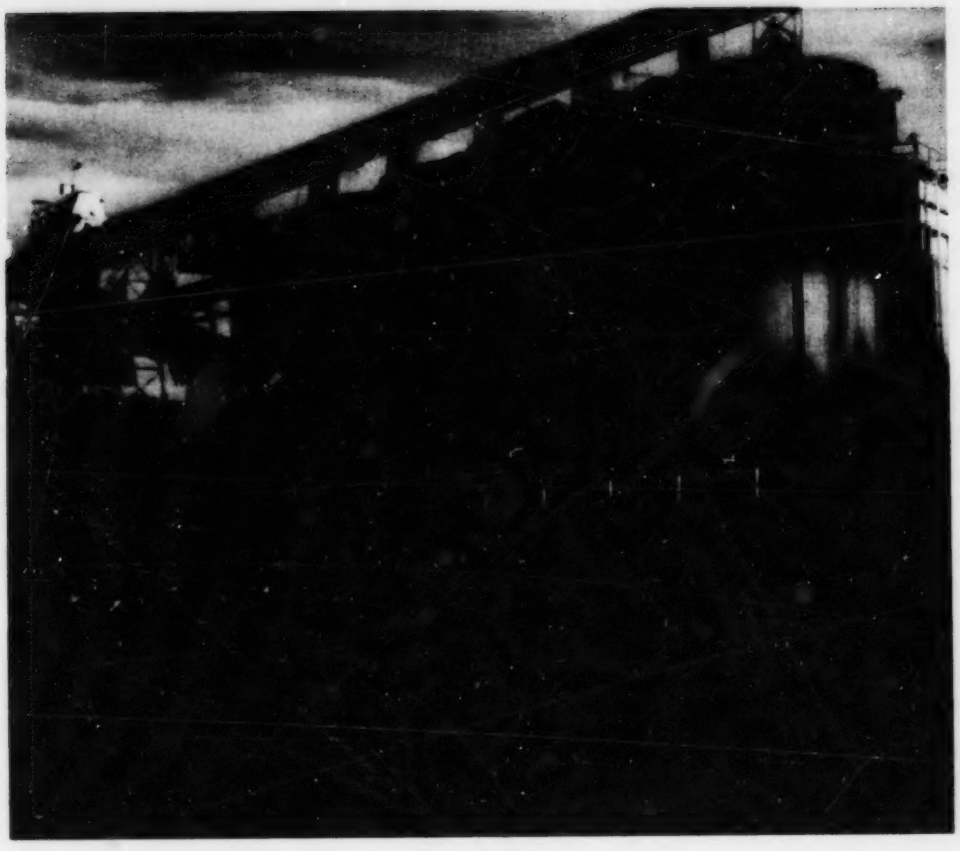
Inner workings

Andres Suarez

CHAPTER 10

BEHIND THE SCENES OF A WORK DAY

There's more to Granville Island *than meets the visitor's eye. Beyond the markets, the craft shops, the theatres and events, there's a side of the Island that's strictly business. Whether it's managing a company, making a product, or simply seeing that the public face of the Island continues to run like a well-oiled machine, a certain contingent of people come to the Island every day to do a job. These are a few of their stories.*



Helen Drost

■ Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. unloads gravel barged here from B.C.'s Sunshine Coast.
■ Glass-blowing shop (opposite).

1415 JOHNSTON ST.

Nobody has a view of Granville Island quite like Dave MacArthur. The mixer operator sits atop a four-storey tower in the middle of the Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. yard like an air-traffic controller, only what he controls is the flow of ingredients that make up concrete. They come from every direction: aggregate and cement from conveyor belts running out of neighbouring silos, fly ash from a truck parked at the base, chemical admix from bottles in the tower and water pumped up from the plant's own reservoir. MacArthur watches each new mixer truck pull into the loading bay below on a video monitor; two computer monitors help him keep track of trucks, volumes and projects scattered around the City. With each new load, a receipt with specifications on the mixture rolls off the adjoining printer. MacArthur checks the hard copy against what's on the screen. Okay, load away!

It all sounds very high-tech, but it isn't. This tower has been in service since 1963. The office building and maintenance shops across the yard have been here more than 80 years. As the largest industrial operation remaining on the Island, Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. is a part of the Island's past. And if the plant's managers have their way, it will also be a part of the Island's future.

Ocean wants to invest a quarter of a million dollars in this operation, provided it can obtain a lease extension to 2015, says company vice-president Ron Lankester. Lankester has been working here 43 years. He remembers when the neighbours included Sangster Boatbuilding, Mack Trucks, Arrow

Transfer and a glue factory. Today Ocean sticks out amid the craft shops and restaurants like a proverbial sore thumb, yet the company is committed to staying here. Why?

"Concrete is a perishable product," Lankester explains. It will keep in a mixer at the right consistency for about two hours. Thanks to its location on Granville Island, Ocean's trucks can deliver fresh concrete to building sites in Vancouver's downtown core in minutes. The next closest barge-accessible sites might be half an hour away in Richmond or North Vancouver. Not only does the Granville Island concrete arrive in better shape, but Ocean's drivers spend less time on the road and more time loading and unloading the product.

■ A masterpiece in miniature at B & B Scale Models (below).
■ Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. mixer: being minutes from downtown has its advantages.

1459 ANDERSON ST.

There's an air of urgency around the B & B Scale Models shop. The company has just a few hours left to deliver an extraordinarily lifelike rendering of the proposed new international airport in Santiago, Chile, to an architectural firm across town. At one table, a young man is glueing tiny steel (actually white plastic) roof beams to a curving glass (clear plastic) roof. At another, a woman is assembling pieces to the base. At yet another station, an architect uses a computer to model and cut miniature airplanes out of clear plastic.

Courtesy of B & B Scale

A modern manufacturing operation with 30 employees and an element of artistry and craft, B & B might have been an obvious candidate to move onto the revitalized Granville Island 20 years ago, but no property manager came knocking. B & B was already here. The company actually moved to its current site under the Granville Bridge from West Broadway in 1976. It had just completed a scale model of the Island itself for its federal developers. Already a number of up-and-coming architects had opened offices in the nearby Creekhouse building. Owner Bernd Zwick could already see the advantages of locating at what was then still a run-down warehouse district.

Today "Every architect knows where Granville Island is," Zwick says. You might have trouble dragging them out to Annacis Island, but not here. His customers – developers and architects – gladly make the trip. These days, the majority of clients are coming in from out of town.

Zwick, who started as an apprentice model-maker in Berlin, has recruited modelling talent from all over the world. "We have [people from] 13 countries working here," he smiles. "We used to have 15 but a couple of people left."

1592 JOHNSTON ST.

"There are a million different personalities in the world and at one time or another they all arrive here," muses Cpl. John Redekop, second-in-command of Granville Island's Canadian corps of commissionaires. The six commissionaires posted here are members of a federal security force that oversee law enforcement on the Island. Though they are not armed, referring potentially violent situations to the Vancouver Police Department, they deal with most of the day-to-day enforcement issues such as parking,

lock-up, first aid, parking lot patrols and public disturbances. There is at least one commissionaire on the Island at all times.

In the past year, commissionaires spotted a man preparing to jump from the Granville Bridge. The officer on duty informed the police as to the person's location. He was eventually talked down from the railings. On another occasion a commissionaire observed and reported an assault on the Burrard Bridge, resulting in the apprehension of a suspect. Perhaps the most noteworthy incident in recent years though happened in 1997, when a commissionaire helped police with a major drug bust. A group of drug smugglers approached the Island in a small, open boat from a larger craft waiting offshore. The commissionaire spotted the smugglers; the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit of City Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were on hand to make the arrest.

The commissionaires coordinate their own activities with security forces in the Public Market and the Fisheries & Oceans Canada dock immediately opposite the Island, as well as the Vancouver Police. On July 7, 1991, a fire at the Canadian Coast Guard dock under the Burrard Bridge forced commissionaires to block traffic and evacuate the Public Market and Bridges Restaurant; both were briefly surrounded by potentially toxic smoke.

1244 CARTWRIGHT ST.

"Hey, Joel? Can you give me an eyeball on these tabletops?" Mark Gagnon calls out. Gagnon and Martin Stonehouse are fitting two kidney-shaped slabs of inch-thick glass onto a rough-patterned ceramic bed. Joel Berman, the owner of this glass studio, descends the stairs to inspect their handiwork.

"You'd better clean it one more time," Berman suggests. The glass-makers go at it again with Windex and lint-free towels. Finally, the pattern set, the tabletops in place, Berman has them lower a kiln that fits over the platform like a huge box lid from pulleys in the ceiling. The kiln is turned on. It will take fours hours to fire the glass, and another 12 to cool. The next

Courtesy of Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd.

morning they once again raise the lid. What comes out is two slabs of glass, now frosted to a rough pattern.

In 10 years on the Island, Berman has built an international reputation making architectural glass for builders and furniture makers. With seven kilns and 18 employees, it's too big to be called a craft shop, too small and hands-on to be a factory. Such labels don't concern Berman. Some of his employees have degrees in disciplines like art restoration; others came as unskilled employees from the Canada Manpower office and stuck.

Berman's cast glass hangs in the NAFTA Business Centre in Mexico City and decorates an aquarium in Texas. Some are true sculptures, such as a 14-foot-diameter glass ball made for the Vancouver International Airport. Others are bread-and-butter stair pieces or cast-glass signs bearing the Starbucks Coffee logo. Berman developed many of the studio's techniques himself, such as the painting system he uses to create coloured glass.

He's had to open a second shop nearby on 5th Avenue, but he keeps the head office on the Island because, as he puts it, "Clients are inclined to come down here if they're in town. You never hear anybody say, 'No, I don't want to go down to Granville Island.' They come here, we make a presentation, we go to lunch. It works."

■ Micon Industries' forge makes drill bits for mining and construction (below).

1325 CARTWRIGHT ST.

The linoleum is turning up slightly at the corners, and the filing cabinet in the offices of Micon Industries has clearly seen better days. Ray Thompson draws an old press clipping out of one file, a story from *The Province* newspaper under the headline, "Getting rid of industries." It dates back to 1975, when a plan was first hatched to redevelop Granville Island. The redevelopment, of course, went ahead. But Thompson and his company, Micon Industries, are still here.

Micon is a living, and still thriving, embodiment of the Island's history. Inside the grease- and soot-blackened forge, workers take steel bars, heat them to a malleable red-hot hue in a furnace, then hammer them into shape under a mechanical forging hammer dating back to the 1940s. The forging hammer pounds up and down like a giant stapler. It's loud and hot – the old Fahrenheit thermometer in here has been known to hit 120 degrees, even with all the doors and windows open – but this has kept Micon in business supplying the mining industry with drill bits and the construction industry with jackhammers since 1960. "We have one computer," Thompson admits. "It's the one that does the accounting."

Stefan Kagi

1247 CARTWRIGHT ST.

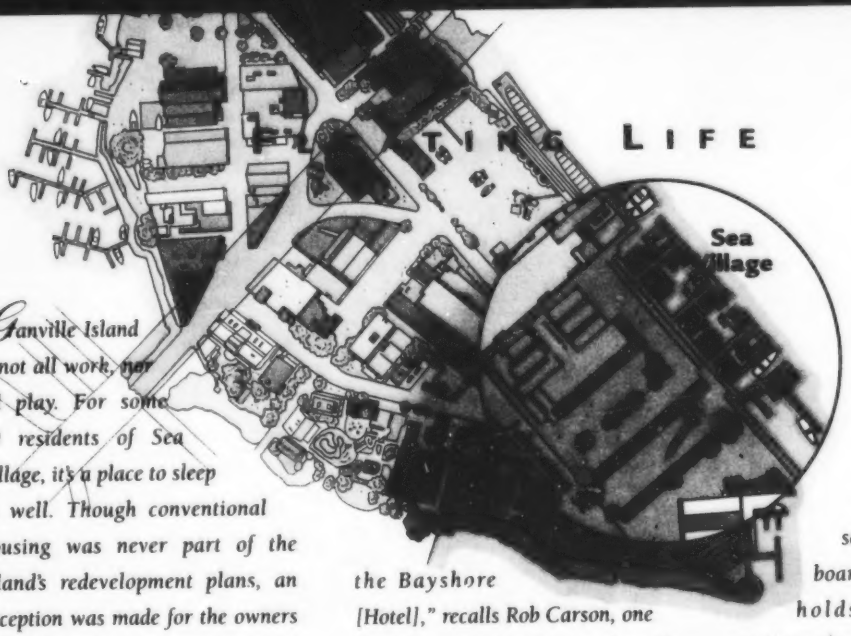
It's a short walk from David Bradford's home on False Creek's south shore to his boatbuilding shop on Granville Island. On the way he passes the granite seawall and short gravel shore of Alder Bay, after which he named his company. Other entrepreneurs may be more interested in growing their revenues and profits; Bradford prefers to keep things simple. Some tools, some wood and his own one-man boat-building shop.

As he fashions rowing and sailing craft at the rate of one every two to six months, Bradford is attempting no less a task than to revive the boatbuilding tradition on the West Coast that has all but disappeared since the end of the Second World War. And he feels that Granville Island is possibly the best place to do it.

"There were mills here, and wherever there were mills, there were boatbuilders," he says. As the old wooden boatbuilders were run out of business by competitors mass-producing boats from aluminum and fibreglass, their skills were lost. Bradford, who began making softwood spars in 1977 a stone's throw away on the north shore of False Creek, has made a life project of gathering old plans, photographs and boats themselves – he taught himself many of the old masters' skills. Today thousands of visitors a year stop by his shop to watch Bradford cut and bend and varnish the cedar and mahogany into "clinker" (ridged) and "lap straight" (smooth) hulls for rowboats and sailboats. To him, those finely-crafted boats are more important than sales or earnings.

"My whole being," he insists, "is [about] trying to keep connected to that heritage, to the things that matter."

FLOATING LIFE



Granville Island is not all work, nor all play. For some 30 residents of Sea Village, it's a place to sleep as well. Though conventional housing was never part of the Island's redevelopment plans, an exception was made for the owners of 13 houseboats who were evicted from their previous home in Coal Harbour in 1979.

Larry Wells

The group were pioneers of modern houseboat living in Canada. Viewed as "water squatters" by civic politicians on the right side of the political spectrum and reviled as self-righteous yuppies on the left, the houseboat dwellers launched a public-relations campaign to drum up support for their community. They went so far as to bus politicians and media down to Seattle to show them how houseboat communities worked there – there were no houseboat communities in Canada then. Still, suburban municipalities weren't prepared to take the houseboats. Finally, City Hall and the Granville Island administration worked out a deal to move the community to the Island. The move did not come without its problems. One of the houses, belonging to Brian Darby, "did the full U-boat right in front of the Bayshore [Hotel]," recalls Rob Carson, one of seven original residents who still lives at Sea Village, as they came to call their new home on False Creek. "Most of us have done pretty well by living here," says Carson, who has raised two kids in the 800-square-foot watercraft. Like most of the homes in Sea Village, Carson's has been upgraded in the past 18 years. Today it has all the look and feel of a tasteful family home – leaning towards the vacation cabin with its wood fittings and wicker chairs. The faintest of rocking can be felt as boats pass the rear windows. Every now and then the residents get an unexpected visitor, such as a sea otter known to steal fish off doorsteps. One night about 10 years ago, Carson's wife Anne heard a woman drowning in the Creek around 3:30 in the morning and went out in a dinghy to rescue her.

In other respects, Sea Village is much like any other neighbourhood, if a little more close-knit. Carson points to the houses of Ann-Marie Nehring, who paints out of her own home studio, and Rick Stevenson, a film producer who's at his computer writing screenplays when he isn't on location somewhere. The notice-board on the wharf holds notices of upcoming meetings along with business cards from marine service companies. Where some neighbours might hold block parties, Sea Village holds a huge dock party. The residents rent a whole barge, hire a band, and hold goofy contests such as a "Walk on Water" race. Contestants have to cross False Creek with polyethylene foam shoes and ski poles, drink a beer poised on a float, and return. Sometimes the spontaneous party will break out, Carson says. Just a hot summer night is excuse enough to go diving off your roof. The increased traffic in the Creek has made swimming a less common recreation, he notes. Still, "There's something special about jumping off a roof."

Kim Stallknecht

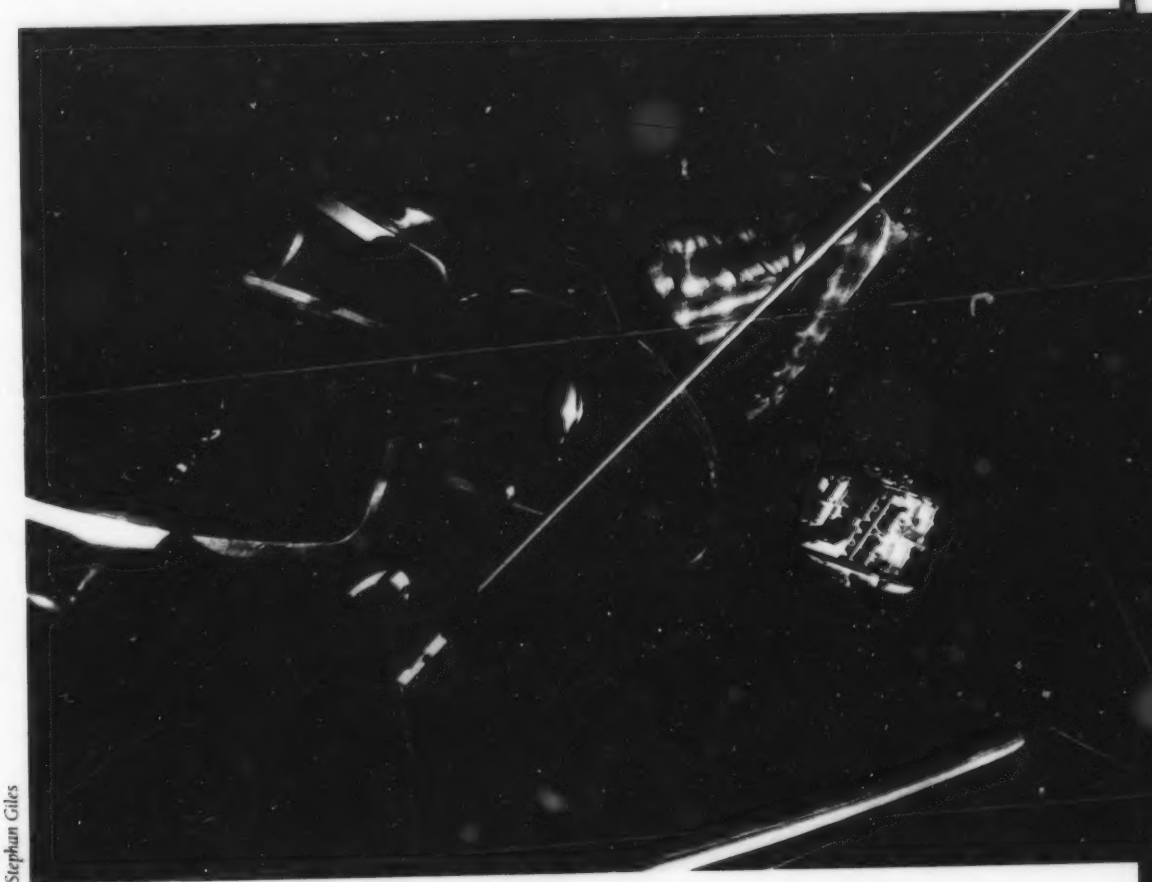
OLD BRIDGE ST.

Outside the Granville Island Maintenance shop, staff load small, rolling dumpster-trailers into a huge trash compactor. Throughout the day you can see them, trailing little trains of garbage in green and recycled materials in blue behind the Island's white pickup trucks. Because the Island is federal land, Granville Island has its own waste disposal system, its own electrical system and water works, its own street cleaning and landscaping.

"It's like running a small city of our own down here," explains Mike Mackenrot, head of operations for the Island. Twelve outside maintenance staff take care of the public areas such as the streets, plazas and parking lots, while another 12 mind the four buildings owned and operated by the Granville Island administration: the Public Market, the Net Loft, Performance Works and the Information Centre.

Inside the maintenance shop on Old Bridge Street, mechanics work on the vehicles, paint signs or pack up their toolbox to take a look at a plumbing problem. Though mostly renovated, the Island's buildings are old and endowed with their share of quirks. Building 73, for example, is the largest undeveloped property on the Island and currently serves as a parking garage. You can still see the evidence of the last tenant here – Morrison Steel – in the walk-through brick kiln at the back. Huge belt rollers and a flywheel hung

■ En pleine air: boater works on his engine (bottom).
■ Two ferry companies ply the waters of False Creek: False Creek Ferries (right, top) and Aquabus (right, below).



Stephan Giles

from the rafters are relics of the network of conveyor belts that whirred around here until the operation folded in 1982. The historical touches, however, can't hide the evidence of slowly rotting beams and the puddle the size of a small duck pond in the middle of the lot. Like every other building on the Island, the planners and engineers and prospective developers will have to decide what to do with it. In the meantime, the maintenance crew has to deal with the leaks and shifts as best it can.

ON FALSE CREEK

Geoff Pratt always knows what's going on around the Island, if not in all of Vancouver. The life of a ferryboat captain is part bus driver and part psychiatrist. Everybody shares their stories on the ride back and forth across the Creek: the commuters who ferry back and forth every morning and afternoon, the business people who make the hop over from the downtown peninsula for lunch, the retirees and tourists who ferry back and forth at any time, typically with shopping bags filled to bursting.

Courtesy of David McInnis

"Every customer thinks they're the only ones riding the boat," he says with a wry smile. Still, he's only too happy to point out the sights and answer the questions, like:

"What's that funny black bird with the long neck?"

"That's a cormorant, ma'am."

"What does the 'CASH' sign mean on the fishing boat there?"

"That there's a company boat. During an opening a boat might catch more fish than it can carry. The company boat will buy fish off those other boats right out there on the fishing grounds."

Courtesy of the CMHC

Two companies run some 17 ferries between the Maritime Museum in the west and Science World in the east. At less than $2 a fare, it's no license to print money, concedes Pratt, who describes himself as "owner, chief cook and bottle washer" at one of them, Aquabus Ferry. But when you get out on the water on a fair morning, there's nothing he'd rather be doing. The stories are just a bonus.

A work in progress

Andres Suarez

CHAPTER 11

THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

Picture this. *The date is November 23, 2018. The occasion: the opening of the Virtual Venice theme park. Visitors shuttle from exhibit to exhibit on computer-guided, high speed gondolas. Graduates from the Emily Carr Institute, which once occupied this site, have been contracted to recreate the murals and architecture and piazzas of the now-submerged Italian port. You'll notice that many of the buildings are actually occupied.*

Yes, owner VV Developments Inc. has taken the concept of the historic theme park a step further with condominium theme living, right here on the waters of False Creek or, as the developer prefers to call it, Rio Escondido.

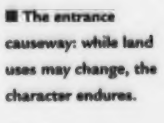
Barry L. Donaldson

For the past century this place has been known to all as Granville Island. Unfortunately, over the past 20 years the sea level has risen three metres as a result of global warming, threatening the once-vibrant neighbourhood that existed here. A variety of citizens' groups proposed different scenarios for the Island, which in recent years has been swamped and inundated by winter storms. Some sought to raise the Island to new heights, which of course would be only a temporary solution. Then there were the well-publicized efforts of the "back to the sandbar" lobby …

Okay, it's a stretch. But it's worth noting that the effort to transform Granville Island 20 years ago was almost as far-fetched. It threw together land uses that had never co-existed before. It relied on principles of planning that had never been applied successfully in North America. Its economic lifeblood relied on a particular amenity, a public food market, that had never succeeded in Vancouver. Moreover, it flew in the face of the prevailing practice of scorched-earth redevelopment of inner cities and adhered to the concept of fiscal responsibility. As cultural planner Chris Wootten notes, the Island's redevelopment spanned the big-government 1970s and the tight-fisted 1980s, and somehow managed to combine the best of both worlds.

Twenty years later, Granville Island is as busy, as popular and as prosperous as ever, testament to its being ahead of its time. It boasts the best selection of food this side of San Francisco, Vancouver's most eclectic cluster of clothing and gift shops, the restaurants with the best views and patios in the city, a visual and performing arts community pulsing with life, a never-ending parade of festivals and special events, and a sporting and seafaring culture all its own. For this reason, more than eight million visitors cross the causeway every year. But Granville Island's success should not be measured solely in numbers. It has become an important element in the city's lifestyle, providing a home for the unique and the unexpected. Vancouverites discovered that immediately, and tourists not long after. Boatbuilder David Bradford explains the Island's attraction this way: "Everywhere a tourist goes, it's a set-up situation. Why Granville Island works is because it's all real. When they look in here, it's a real shop."

■ **Johnston Street at night (top): still tinkering with the formula.**



■ The entrance causeway: while land uses may change, the character endures.

There are, of course, a million and one theories as to why Granville Island succeeded. Most boil down to four distinct advantages. First of all, location. This might seem an obvious, natural thing, but it was not so in the 1970s. Few recognized that False Creek could be clean again and people would flock to its shores. Few saw any future in the aging centre of a quickly sprawling metropolis. Few saw the beauty in old industrial buildings, or the marvel of old machinery, preferably still in use. And finally, few recognized the mystical element of place. As Chris Ladner, owner of the Ecomarine Ocean Kayaking Centre, puts it, "I don't know if it's feng shui, or a convergence of lay lines, or maybe there's an ancient Indian burial site here. There's something that causes people to walk around in a daze. There's got to be something here."

The second secret of Granville Island's success relates to its unique legal status. It has a single landlord, the federal government, with the will and the means to bring about the changes we see today. Unlike a private developer motivated solely to maximize profits, the federal government was prepared to invest in cultural attractions and social policy objectives. It was also not legally bound by the City of Vancouver's development guidelines, since the Island technically lies outside the City's jurisdiction. As a result, both the City and Granville Island came to the planning table voluntarily, not through legal obligation. In hindsight, the arrangement served to bring out the best on both sides.

Third, the Island benefited from inspired planning and management. Its planners hit on the right combination of activities, from such essentials as food, to entertainment and education, improbably combined with existing industry. In turn, Island management attracted and recruited tenants that were both eclectic and astute in business terms. A positive cycle was created as good businesses located here, attracted customers, and made more good businesspeople want to locate here.

Finally, there was a recognition by all – planners, managers, the City, the tenants, and even the visitors – that Granville Island should be different. It should be a place where different rules apply, where it's okay to walk in the streets or loiter on benches. It should be a place that embraces eccentricity and makes time slow down. It should be a place that pays attention to the natural rhythms of life, the changes of the seasons. It should be unafraid to be colourful when the rest of the city tends to shades of grey. It should be a kind of urban oasis that opens our minds to different ways of living our lives, rather than blindly running the rat race. The visitors here would be part of the community, instead of simply customers. Twenty years ago the planners of the new Island hoped that whatever changes did take place, and whatever uses occupied the Island, the essential character of the place would remain intact. That is the true challenge for today's planners and managers. The next 20 years should see the Island build on its base and continue to set the standard in food, in specialty goods, in dining, theatre and education, for the City around it.

The first six decades in the life of Granville Island were characterized by cycles of boom and bust, rapid development and gradual dereliction. The incremental development of diverse land uses since 1978 has served to break those cycles. Approximately 2,500 people (depending on the season) go to work

at Granville Island each day, more than twice as many as did in its industrial heyday. Not every new development has been an unmitigated success, but while the odd project may flag, others continue to thrive. If anything, the Island has spent the last 20 years tinkering, getting the formula just right. It's still not perfect. It may never be. Like it or not, the world outside changes and demands different things of our urban spaces. The Island can only prosper by changing to meet those needs.

As Granville Island celebrates 20 years, it is engaged in debate over the development of an art-house cinema and arcade on several lots between Anderson and Old Bridge streets. An old proposal to run a train or streetcar around the Island was revived. Granville Island managers hoped to redevelop the last truly vacant buildings on the Island, a series of sheds along Railspur Alley, into artists' live/work studios. And Building 73, the largest unimproved structure on the Island, was not expected to remain a parking lot forever.

In other words, don't expect Granville Island to look the same 20 years hence as it does today. When you go to fill your larder, don't expect to see the same food on display. When you go for dinner, or a show, or just to drink in the atmosphere, don't expect the same experience. The unique element of the Island character that will not change is the element of surprise.

Don't expect perfect consensus on the changes that will take place on the Island, either. If the past 20 years are any indication, every proposal will come under close scrutiny. Some will be accompanied by a hue and cry from stakeholders on many sides. This is because Vancouverites have come to care a great deal about Granville Island. It is a place that has become an integral part of their lives. And though it is still, indeed, forever, a work in progress, it retains this enduring character. A place that invites one and all to escape the City, while remaining right in the heart of it.

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Jenn Walton
Larry Wells
R. Write
Alan Wylie

Courtesy of Aldrich/Pears Associates Ltd.

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Galleries, Restaurants, Theatres, Schools, Associations, Recreation and Services – Granville Island has them all. This index lists many of the groups mentioned in our book. Visit and discover more!

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